Harbor Jim

A. Eugene Bartlett

Miss Loppnow

15.10

12-25-26

To Norman

From your

Uncle & Aunt.

E.K.U. Lena U.

HARBOR JIM

SIGNAL HILL, HARBOUR OF ST. JOHNS.

HARBOR JIM

OF NEWFOUNDLAND

By
A. EUGENE BARTLETT, D.D.
Author of "The Joy Maker," etc.

NEW YORK CHICAGO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Copyright, 1922, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street

To those Newfoundlanders who, in gathering harvests from the sea for the world's hungry, have garnered for themselves both faith and courage, I dedicate this book.

Contents

I. Jim and Bob 9

II. The Conversion of Jim . . . 20

III. An Engagement As Planned . . 30

IV. Some Miracles 40

V. "I Asked for Fish" 49

VI. Livin' Along 56

VII. The Heaven Home 61

VIII. Christmas with Jim's Friends . . 68

IX. Honey-Mooning on the Flakes . 80

X. Jim and His Book 86

XI. Railroading with the Kid . . 93

XII. Through the Valley with the Little Fellow 100

XIII. The Queer One 107

I

JIM AND BOB

BOB McCARTNEY was spreading cod on the flakes and I was watching him and estimating the chances of better weather. The sun had not succeeded in rolling back the fog and St. John's was still half asleep in blankets of mist. Signal Hill was altogether hidden and the harbor entrance could not be seen. In the water-soaked atmosphere the flakes were merged together and the tiny houses of the fishers were almost joined into one long rambling house. The air was heavy with the smell of fish and the morning was not conducive to enthusiastic conversation.

Bob McCartney was a Newfoundlander born and bred and had left with his ancestors in Ireland the gift of blarney. This morning in particular he contented himself with monosyllabic answers, that occasionally did not come even to the estate words, but ended only in an effective grunt. Finally he condescended to speak a whole sentence with some little life in his voice.

"Yes, I guess she's agoin' to lift, fer there goes Harbor Jim."

I strained my eyes to see thru the fog and could

just discern a sail boat headed toward what I supposed was the harbor entrance.

"And who is Harbor Jim?" I asked.

"Why, he's my friend and he can knock spalls off'n any Lander in the Dominion," replied Bob and then lapsed into silence as he went on slowly laying out his cod on the flakes.

Just then the sun made a gain and succeeded in piercing thru the fog and I saw, suddenly, a little boat some seventy-five yards out from the shore, and standing out near the bow stood a man as erect as the mast behind him, and looking straight out to sea.

"There's Harbor Jim!" and Bob pointed over his shoulder in the direction of the boat as he spoke the words.

It gave me a thrill, as the light brought him sharply to my attention, to see him standing there, intently looking toward the harbor entrance. I looked from the shore even as he looked from his boat and the sun at that moment uncovered the rocks on both sides. He lifted his hand and the helper behind him brought the sail to the faint breeze that was springing up, and the boat headed for the harbor entrance and the open sea.

The sun seemed to lift Bob's spirit and the sight of Harbor Jim to warm the cockles of his heart, for he began in a good-natured drawl to tell me of the finding of his friend.

"It was the third week in March, eleven years ago, come next spring, that we were sealing down North. Harbor Jim and I were then on Cap'en Boynton's ship. I didn't know Jim then more'n any other fellow. It was an odd kind of a trip. For days it hung nasty and we couldn't have seen a seal if he had been within shot of us.

"Then, one day, I think it was a Friday, but that doesn't matter, it come bright and sparkling and grew cold. By noon our ship was frozen in the ice, and we were waiting and hoping the look-out would see seals. The ice had been piled up in some places and just south it looked like a town, a little village with houses and meeting house and school, all a sparklin' pretty. I never seed bluer sky, deep as chicory flowers and you could see fer miles, seems though you was a-goin' to see thru it almost to 'tother side o' the world.

"Long about two o'clock the look-out yelled: 'Seals to the nor-east!'

"No sooner did he yell than the Cap'en shouted: 'Look alive men! Over and after!'

"Then with gaffs and guns and ropes we went over the ship's side and after the seals. The ice was uncertain and some of the men went thru the crust into the sea, but we quickly pulled them out and were off agin.

"Now in the days before we had decided to make a contest of it, as we often did. It made

good sport and we would get more seals. Harbor Jim and I had chosen up, like they do in a spellin' bee, and all the men had been divided into two sides to see which one on'em would bring the biggest load o' seals back to the ship.

"Unfortunately the seals were some distance from the ship and it was after two when we started. We were so intent on getting the catch that we failed to note it was not only beginning to snow, but also getting on toward the end o' the day.

"At the moment when we should have turned back, I saw an old hood, that's an old seal that pulls a visor over his eyes and fights to a finish. I'd been tender-hearted and passed by just then a young seal that looked kinder pitiful at me and begged for life and I resolved that I'd get the old hood, come what would. He lured me away from the crowd, and when I finally succeeded in silencing him, the men were gone, and thru the snow I could not see the ship.

"Worse luck still the ice-pan on which I stood was beginning to shake and break up. I thought of the woman at home and the boy, and I thought of freezing to death out to sea and I guess, too, I thought o' my sins. The other fellows had gone back to the ship and I was alone, facing the cold, the storm and the night. Then I began to shout in the hope that they were not too far away to hear me. After some waiting, that seemed longer than

probably 'twas, I heared two words and I don't honest think, if I gets to Paradise and the good Lord says, 'Come, Bob, there's room,' it'll sound half so good as it did to me then when I heared ringing out:

"'Comin', Bob!' It was the shout of Harbor Jim. I kept hollering and he found me and together we made our way back. I don't know jes' how and I don't believe he does, but when we reached the rest, we joined hands and felt our way back to the ship.

"I have asked him about it, many a time, but he always says, '*He* showed me the way, Bob, and He'll show you the way. Ask Him, Bob.'

"He went after me when all the rest said he was a fool and a riskin' of his life. That's how I found my friend and I don't believe Jonathan ever loved David more'n I love Jim. He never goes scowways; he always sails straight. But you mustn't think I am the only one that loves him. Jerusalem spriggins, I do believe the whole world would love Jim, if they only could know him."

The lethargy that had been born out of the morning had completely disappeared. Bob had become all animation as he told of the finding of his friend. If I had not known that Bob was a man who never showed his feelings, except in most orderly and measured fashion, I should have thought, once or twice, that the tears were starting, but it must have

been the dampness of the morning, that the sun was now fast drying up.

The city of St. John's now stood out clear in the sunshine. Harbor Jim's boat had gone thru the narrow entrance and disappeared out to sea. Both sides of the bay stood out sharp, revealing a harbor that from many viewpoints is as beautiful as that of Naples.

Bob carefully laid out his last fish and left it to dry on the flakes. Rubbing his sleeve across his face, he abruptly turned and said:

"I needs a plug of terbaccy. Walk down town and I'll tell you how Jim got his name."

I did not need a second invitation and we started toward town.

"You see it was this-away. His mother gave him the Jim, but his friends and neighbors give him the Harbor.

"Jim was always one to take chances, 'specially if some one needed him. Didn't he take a chance—a big one—when he saved me on the ice-pan? But somehow he always pulled thru. Other boats would lie outside and wait but Jim would pull thru the Narrows and tie up and be home afore the others. The others dasn't come into the Harbor, a fear o' the rocks.

"Folks come to say, 'Jim always makes the Harbor.' Then jes' naturally they come to call him Harbor Jim. It's so now that the women

folks are always glad if their men can go with Jim, for they feel that then they'll sure come back. Everybody who lives yere loves Harbor Jim."

"I would like to meet Harbor Jim and have a talk with him," I said, when Bob ceased talking and trudged on in silence. "I am sure he has a philosophy worth hearing about and adopting."

"You can meet him all right," replied Bob, "but as for talkin' much with him, I don't know. He isn't very strong on talkin'. He says some folks talk so much, they set their tongue to goin' and go off and leave it runnin' and it does a heap a mischief. Another time he sed to me that he thought most folks would *do* more if they talked less.

"I remember a year ago a white-washed Yankee was here travelling for some soap concern. He heared about Harbor Jim and wanted me to take him over to his house and introduce him and I did. That Yankee started right in doing all the talkin'. He had a tongue that was balanced and would wag easy. He told Jim he was making a mistake in not having a bigger garden, that he ought to farm more and fish less. He told him what the Dominion needed and when at last he began to get out of breath he turned to Jim and said:

"'What do you think?'

"And Harbor Jim just said kind of slow like and deliberate:

"'Guess you have said it all, sir, but mebbe when everybody goes to farming they will need a little fish to change off from potatoes and cabbage, and I guess I better bid you good day and go fishing.' That was every word Jim said and that Yankee watched him go out of sight and what that Yankee said then want a credit to him nor favorable to the Dominion."

I smiled at the thought of the discomforted travelling man and wondered if my own luck or my own tact would succeed any better, for I was already convinced that Harbor Jim was a man worth knowing.

"Suppose we go and meet Mrs. Harbor Jim," I said to Bob when the tobacco had been purchased and his pipe was doing right.

"If you say so, but meetin' her ain't the same as meetin' him. She's all right, but she's jes' learning from Jim, she says so herself," answered Bob.

Their home was in a little town a few miles out from St. John's and it was kind of Bob to go out with me. After a walk of about an hour we stood looking down upon a little fishing village with great, brown-stained rocks protecting it a little from the sea.

"This is his town," said Bob, "can you find his house?"

But they looked alike to me; for all were small rectangular affairs, flat-roofed, shingled and painted

white. Jim's house was evidently no different from his neighbor's.

"I guess I'll have to tell you," Bob chuckled, as we went down a lane and saw two rather dirty children at play in front of a house where a woman was bending over a tub of clothes.

"Hello, Bob, did Jim go out?" the woman called, as soon as she recognized Bob.

"Yes, he went out a couple of hours ago. Here's a man who wants to meet Mrs. Harbor Jim."

She wiped her hands on her wet apron, pushed the hair back from the baby's face as she passed her and beckoned us to follow her into the house. Extending her hand she said:

"I think, sir, you want to see my husband, but he's a fishin' and may not be back afore tomorrow. Can I do anything for you, sir? There's some brewse,* on the back of the stove, if you care to eat. I am wondering what you can be awantin' this time of a working morning? Is it that some one has fell sick and wants Jim to watch or pray?"

"We were a bit tired with walking and thought we would like to rest and see you and the children in passing," I said none to easily, for the little woman was searching us hard to find the reason of our visit.

Bob came to our rescue by starting a conversation about the promise of prices for fish and what

*A Newfoundland dish of hard bread, fish and pork.

Bill Coaker was doing for the Fishermen's Protective Union. Relieved by the shift in the conversation I looked about the room. It was positively no different from other fishermen's homes that I had visited; no better furniture, no more of it; the house was no cleaner; and the woman, who was Jim's wife, was on a par with other women of the neighborhood; only she seemed a little brighter and a certain light was in her eyes when she spoke of Jim. There was just one object that attracted my attention, a spruce tree in one corner, and I asked the purpose of it.

She replied: "Jim keeps a tree in that corner. He says it keeps him remembering how beautiful the world is. He says it connects us with out o' doors and Jim loves the open country just as he does the sea."

Then after a pause she added: "But you must come again when Jim is home. I want you to know him. I wish every one could know Jim; he is so good, so true, so kind!"

That was all I could find out about Harbor Jim that day, but I did not forget that tribute to her husband, spoken simply, out of her heart, and it made me feel as I went back to the city with Bob, that perhaps I had under-estimated her ability and worth. It was more than a week afterward that in unexpected fashion and without introduction, I met Jim. But there was not a day of that week that I

did not think of the little woman in faded blue, her flaxen hair falling over her face in confusion, because of wind and work, as I had seen her that morning over the white-picketed fence of Jim's house. I knew that I should not leave St. John's until I had seen Harbor Jim and his wife again.

II

THE CONVERSION OF JIM

THE pressure of my own work, during the following days, postponed my intended visit to Harbor Jim's. Then, one afternoon, I started for a walk, not to Jim's, but to Signal Tower by way of the flakes. The path I chose wound around among the little fishermen's summer homes and past the flakes now heavy with fish curing in the sun; then across the little valley, near the end of the promontory, up back of the hospital to Cabot Tower and down around the reservoir back to the city. St. John's offers many attractive walks. There is the road out to Quidi Vidi, past the little lake where the regattas are held. There is the road to Bowring Park that gives one the quiet of woods there, with many flowers and a little, singing brook; but for one who loves the sea and the fishers, the walk that goes along the flakes must ever be the favorite.

The afternoon of my walk was clear and the deep, blue water of the harbor was in sight most of the way. I had reached Cabot Tower and had been looking across the unhindered sea toward Ireland, the nearest land beyond, and was turning to go down toward the city, that lay comfortably upon

the hills in the mellow, warm light of late afternoon, when I noticed a rather tall, bronzed fisherman, standing close by, evidently sharing the view with me.

I turned and looked squarely at him and thought, "John Cabot himself might have been such a one as you are."

I nodded and the fellow returned it and said, removing his hat as he spoke:

"Don't you think we had better uncover before such a view as that?"

I did as he suggested and drawn to the fellow by his winsome smile I decided to go back to the city with him; but there was a certain reserve in his manner, that did not make it quite easy to go with him unbidden. I hesitated and then asked:

"Have you any objection to my walking back to the city with you?"

"Not in the least," he replied, "provided you do not spoil the last of the day with too many words. You see, sir, I need some time to let that scene sink into my soul."

For a New Yorker who had been interviewing Dominion leaders and talking politics in the interests of a newspaper, the command to keep silent was at least a surprise, but no doubt altogether wholesome.

We started toward the city. The hill drops rather rapidly, you may remember, and then winds

more leisurely. Forbidden to spoil the afternoon with words, I could at least watch my unknown companion who chose to practice the vow of silence like a Trappist monk.

He was a fisherman. His clothes told me that, but there was to his walk an elasticity, a certain springiness that the fishermen I knew had lacked. He carried his head higher, his back was straighter. He walked as the son of a King might have walked, who had decided for the time to travel incognito and had chosen the garb of a fisherman.

Now and then I would get a little ahead of him for the chance of looking back and up into his face. The very smile with which he had closed my mouth lingered and lit his face, just as light sometimes lingers on clouds at sunset. I fell to wondering how long it would last, just as sometimes I had estimated the length of sunsets.

We came to a house and a little girl, seeing him, came running down and, without a word, slipped her hand into the man's and walked on some three rods and then left him and went back into the house from which she had come. She also smiled and seemed glad to walk and be silent.

The houses increased in number as we came down the hill. Two boys came and, grabbing each a hand of my companion, walked a little way with him. This time he bestowed upon the boys, not words but a marble a piece. The boys utterly ig-

nored me, kept their eyes rivetted upon him and left, giving him a hearty "Thank you!"

When we came to the last dip of the hill that descends into the city, he paused and, keeping his eyes on the western sky, said:

"Hard on you, sir! I didn't intend to be rude, but since I was converted I have to have more time to myself. Seems only fair that a fellow should have a little time now and then to enjoy his own company. Here's a good place to watch the Lord as He blesses the city at the close of the day."

He waved me to a seat beside him and we sat watching. The silence was not as oppressive. I was a little nearer to my companion and the great gray clouds suffused with pink rivetted my attention. As the sunset waned and the cold, gray of night came on, he got up and, starting toward the city, said:

"Thank you for praying with me."

Now I had not been aware of having said anything at all, but I remembered that prayer may be uttered or unexpressed and ventured no reply.

"Words often weigh down as well as lift. A lot of folks are smothered with them." He was breaking the silence which he had stipulated should be maintained until the view had sunk into his soul. "Words have to be well chosen, then they lift their pound. I'm not averse to talking on occasion; only, I find, when I'm talking too much, I'm thinking too

little. Then, again, God wants to have His say now and then, and how can He, if we are sputtering all the while? Guess He talks still to some folks in the cool of the evening just as He did in the old garden."

Released from the command to be silent and no longer with the opportunity of seeing my companion clearly, for it was fast growing dark, I felt that I would very much like to know something more of this strange, yet likable, fellow, and the words that he had spoken about his conversion prompted me in turn to break the silence.

"I think I have received more out of this walk and this sunset than any I can remember, but my conversion was evidently not the same as yours. I would like to know about your conversion. Maybe it would open my eyes wider and let me see more as you do."

I spoke now, not curiously, but earnestly, for I wanted to know how he could find so much on the old familiar hill and how I might find what he was finding.

He laughed heartily and his laugh left the situation less tense and made him seem more human.

"Maybe my conversion won't interest you," he said, "then again, it may help you. It was on this very road, I was converted. Only it was in the morning at half past nine. It was a foggy morning. Newfoundland has a good many of them. I

used to think, too many, before I was converted, but now it seems to me best, for it just curtains the beautiful world and each time the curtain lifts it seems a little fairer than before for the waiting.

"Now I've always loved the hills and the sea and enjoyed a good view, as most fishermen do, but that morning I was scuffing along, out of patience with a poor catch of the day before and seeing nothing but fog. The sea and the hills were out of sight. Suddenly I heard a voice say:

"'Why don't you look at yourself, Jim?'

"I stopped stock still in the middle of the road, like a hand had been put upon me and detained me. The voice was no more but the question was for me and it had to be answered.

"It would take some time, so I decided to sit down and consider it. I could show you the very rock, sometime, if you cared to see it. I had never done much thinking 'till that morning. I said to myself:

"'James, you don't know yourself well enough to call yourself by your first name. You have peeped into your neighbors' affairs. You've criticised other folks but you've never really gotten acquainted with yourself.'

"So I stood myself up and asked myself questions in a real, down-right, honest desire to see just what I was and what I was doing here. First I says:

"'Who are you, Jim?'

"And I figured out that I had the right answer, though I had forgotten it and lived in contradiction of it. I was and I am a child of the Father.

"Do you know, sir, the knowledge of that will ask a man a good many more questions and answer 'em, too.

"'Where are you living, Jim?' I said to myself and the answer came, 'You are living in His world and it's a good world. He made it for you and His other children. He's put fish in all the seas and if it ain't one kind it's another. There is enough in His world for all the children, and if any on'em starves, it's because some on'em is blind or the other children has forgotten they are to share His things. It's a fair world, with blue sky and little birds that sing, and little flowers that praise Him, too.'

"It's a cheery thought, sir, that we're a livin' in *His* world. It makes it worth while to live right. Then the next question I put myself was this:

"'What are you worth?'

"I reckoned up and found I was worth five quintals of salt fish, a half a barrel of cod liver oil and twelve lobster pots, most of 'em empty. I owned no house and aside from the fish I had $149 in the bank and an extra suit of clothes that wouldn't count for much.

"'Is that *all* you're worth,' I said, and I saw it

wasn't enough to count me rich. I remembered, I could really think that morning, that Job's riches were not in camels and sheep. So I might be rich in other things beside codfish and oil, but I grew ashamed of myself that morning when I come to see how little I could count up that was worth carrying with me for eternity.

" Bob McCartney's friendship, the part I'd given, counted a little; but when it come to counting faith and hope and truth, it didn't show up very well. I was poor and I had come to know it and that was the best part of it. There was hope then for me and a chance I might become rich.

" ' Where are you going? ' again the Voice asked me a big question. I meet folks who have forgotten, just as I had done. But it helps to keep a fellow on the right track to remember where the road ends.

" ' What are you doing here? ' was the next question and I put myself to answer it there on the rock that morning I was converted.

" Fishing, I answered first, but what for, and is that all, came the questions. Now I take it fishing or farming, writing or preaching, it don't make much difference, so long as we're each just where He wants us to be and are doing just what He wants us to do. And every man has got to find out if he is where the Father wants him to be.

" It didn't take me long to find out that I might

be where He wanted me to be, but I knew I wasn't doing all He wanted me to do and I was adoin' a good many things He didn't want me to do.

"Then I made some resolutions. Some folks don't believe in 'em, I know, but they always seemed to me to be good crutches, till a man could manage to get on without them and learn to walk straight. I resolved to be the best fisherman ever put out to sea, to clean my fish thorough, to salt 'em well and sell 'em honest weight.

"Then I resolved to know more of His world since He made it for me and the other children. Then, I remembered that since He had sent His Son to show the way, I'd better listen to Him and go His way.

"The next day I went over to Parson Curtis' and said to him:

"'Yesterday was my day o' grace, and I was converted at half past nine. I'm not saved, but I'm on the way to salvation and I'd like to be broughten just as near to His Son as I can be. I'm just a learnin', but no child ever wanted to learn more than I do now.'

"So when it come Sunday, he took me into the fellowship of Jesus and I've been learnin' ever since."

I think I have given you almost his words. You see they were short, real words, and the only fear I

have is that in repeating them I may have lost the quiet, deep-seated earnestness that was in his voice. He spoke that night from his heart. We were on Water Street now and it was time for us to part.

"Thank you," I said, and I spoke as sincerely as he had spoken, "and if you don't mind I would like to know your name. It is James, what?"

He reached out a big hand and took a firm grip of mine and said: "I'm Jim. Harbor Jim they call me." And then I remembered that I had been looking for him.

III

AN ENGAGEMENT AS PLANNED

"COME," came a voice from within and I opened the door and stepped into Harbor Jim's cozy home. Its warmth and cheer were in sharp contrast to the evening without. It was raining hard and everything was saturated with water. Out of the chill and wet, I stepped across the threshold into warmth and dryness.

I thought at once of the Cotter's Saturday night. In the centre of the room at a little table, close to a kerosene lamp, was Harbor Jim reading from the Bible, and sharing the rather uncertain light with him was his wife with a pile of stockings to be mended, in her lap. Beyond them, a small fire-place with rough stone dogs. A spruce fire crackled like pop corn and did its best to dissipate anything of disconsolateness that might have crept in from the night's cold rain. At the right of the fire-place, on a roll of comforters, lay a little girl of perhaps two years, breathing gently in her sleep.

Harbor Jim did not rise to greet me but with a motion of his hand expressed his desire that I should remove my wet coat and take the empty chair. He paused long enough for me to be com-

fortably seated and resumed his reading. He was in the midst of the Ninety-First Psalm, and he read slowly on, as one none too familiar with print and anxious that no word or meaning be lost.

" He shall cover thee with His wings, and under His feathers shalt thou trust. You understand it, Effie," he said, turning to his wife. " It's the picture you see every day when the mother hen tucks the little ones under her wings.

" You, sir, will remember," he turned now to me, " that our Master used the same thought of the cuddling power of love, when He stood on Olivet and looked down on the sin-blind Jerusalem. I would have gathered you as a hen doth her chicks under her wing.

" His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. This sentence puzzled me for a good while, chiefly because I didn't know what a buckler was. For a long time I couldn't find any Lander who did know. Finally I got an Englishman to look it up in a book he had and he told me it was something that went all around the body. Then I seed it plain. The Lord was to protect us at the one danger point, with the shield; but He doesn't stop there, He protects us at all points with the buckler."

He did not pause again in the reading of the Psalm until he came to the word angels, and then he spoke rather forcibly of his belief in angels.

" Yes, I believe in angels, travelling angels. Why

shouldn't He let 'em travel? He let's us go about, then surely He must let them journey considerable more. Naturally they want to be where they are needed most and I reckon this world needs 'em. When we get the listenin' habit, we'll all hear 'em, and when we get to the trustin' habit, we'll obey 'em when they bring us messages. I reckon they've helped me a good deal. Sometimes they guide me to a big haul of fish, but more often they bring me to a passage of Scripture, that's like a draft of cool water on a thirsty day. I don't want you to think I'm looney, sir, but I fancy they walk with me sometimes and most often when no humans are with me."

At the last verse he paused and then read these words twice:

"With long life will I satisfy thee. This promise has troubled me a good deal. It don't seem to be coming true. Good little kids die; and tough, scaly old rascals live on poking fun at the righteous. I have been wondering what the Hebrews meant, for a good many of their prophets have said the same thing.

"Mebbe it's one of the delayed promises. But I imagine it is coming true oftener than we know. There is some connection between holiness and happiness and between contented days and lengthened days. It is natural to expect the man who obeys the law to find the benefit here and now in

this life. Well, if the Lord had each one of us alone working out the promises, it would be very easy for Him and for us, but He's seen fit to let us live together and we interfere with one another considerable; but He thinks it best because we've got to get well acquainted with each other before we are really able to know Him. As we get so we can understand the laws for the many as well as the laws for the each, I guess we'll most of us live long, but now the main thing is to live well."

"But does it seem quite fair, Jim?" his wife questioned him, naturally, as though they were alone together.

"I've thought about that a good while, Effie," he replied. "If I had only one day to fish and only caught something on one hook in twenty-eight, it would be a sorry day for me and you 'uns; but since I've many days, it doesn't matter which day I get the fish, so long as I get 'em. Now, I take it, it doesn't make much difference whether the bounty and the blessing He's intended for each of us comes one day or another, so long as it never fails to come. If this earth day was all I couldn't believe in Him as I do, but when I remember that there are days that have no ending, why it seems all right to have some getting a little more this day and others a little more that day. It's all in the life time of the soul. How long we stay in this room of Hisn' and

how much He gives us don't matter much in the long years o' eternity. Do you begin to see how it is, Effie?"

Then Jim closed his Bible and was silent. Without the rain came down and beat its loud tattoo upon the roof. The spruce log ceased to crackle and the little kerosene light seemed to relax its effort now that it was no longer necessary to read the print. I had learned in the few weeks that I had known Jim, that silence even more than speech hath her rewards. After a quarter of an hour of quiet, in which we could hear in the occasional let up of the rain the tick-tock of the little clock on the shelf, I ventured a question:

"How long have you been married, Jim?"

"Fourteen years," he answered, "and it was no mistake that we made when we built this home. There's been rain, but the sun came out the quicker because of the together-spirit we had. Would you be interested, sir, in hearing how we started out?"

My face answered him and he began to tell me such parts of his own love story as it pleased him to tell.

"I was not married until after I was converted, that was a good thing! There is a good many reasons why a man should be converted before he is married. If there is anything in this life, more'n another in which the hand of God should be felt it's marriage.

"I'd had friends among the girls before I was converted, but I'd never thought of settling down, until after that morning. Then I come to see that a man needed a home on shore as well as a boat on the sea; that a man would be likely to catch more fish if he had some one waiting on shore and that fish never tasted so well when eaten alone.

"I got to readin' the book of Genesis one night. I never read the Bible much till after I was converted, and then it became a new book to me and I began diggin' in it for treasure and I'm by no manner a means thru diggin' and findin' treasure. I come across the command in Genesis: To be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. I halted there that night for a spell o' thinkin' and I came to the conclusion that I ought to do my part and leave some one else to take my place and fish when I lay down the hooks. The next thing was to find the right one. Now a Bible readin' man is a prayin' man. And I shut the book and I prayed, for if there is anywhere a man needs guidance it is in finding the right one and keepin' offen the rocks o' trouble and despair in such matters.

The next morning I went fishing the same as usual. I've noted that the Lord never hurries an answer to a man who prays and then stands round idle waitin' for his answer. Seems the Lord loves to surprise a man with his answer while he's in the midst of work.

"So the weeks went by till one late afternoon I was walking along the flakes and I see a young woman splitting cod in the front yard of a house, and the western light rested on her hair and it shimmered and she looked up as I come by and we both smiled. Sir, then, I knew, just as plain as a straight, taut line that she was the one and I had my answer from the Lord, but I had still to get her answer. Some times you have to wait for a woman's answer same as you do for the Lord's.

"The next afternoon, about the same time, I come by her house, and just as I expected she was there splitting cod, and that afternoon we talked. I'd inquired and found her name was Effie Streeter. Now what I said and the walks we had together wouldn't interest you, and anyhow they belonged to us. But perhaps you might like to hear a little of our engagement day. It come out just as I planned only a little better.

"I was pretty sure then and it has been confirmed to me many times since that a woman likes to have her joys come as surprises. Now if I'd a proposed to her on the ordinary walk on an ordinary evening, she might have accepted but it wouldn't have come with the happiness that comes when you're not expecting, then it's like light out of dark cloud or flowers that come quick after a long winter's snow.

"One night I stopped in at her house and told

her I had to go on business over beyond Brigus and would like to have her go with me on the train the next morning. It would be a short trip and we would be back at night, on the train.

"A fellow doesn't have much choice of trains here, but some seasons you can go somewhere and get back the same day, but not every season.

"It was the middle of July, but as I started for the station, thinks I, it might be colder up at Brigus and I took along my great coat, so she would be sure to be warm. We made the ride up, without event. It is a lovely ride to Brigus, as you know, sir.

"I don't remember much that we said on the way, do you, Effie?" and he turned to her acquiescing smile. "But I had the place all selected and I never expect to forget that day, either here or in Kingdom Come.

"Under the shadow of a spruce we sat down and before us were acres and acres of sheep laurel. The winter before had been cold and that summer the laurel was redder than ever I have seen it, before or since. Away beyond was Conception Bay with its hills and the wonderful blue water. I don't know, sir, what scenes there are over seas, but I doubt if there's a lovelier view anywhere in the world than that.

"I had rehearsed pretty well what I was going to say and I have never forgotten it to this day,

and I am glad I haven't. Some forget what they say before marriage and it brings a black shadow after marriage.

"It was so very beautiful, that we set a spell, a holdin' hands and lookin' with our souls as well as our eyes.

"'Effie,' I said, 'I've brought you here to say a great word and I felt it ought to be said in the fairest place in the world. This is the loveliest place I know and if I knew a fairer one I'd have taken you there. The word I am going to say is the one God said when it was dark and He decided to make it light. It's the word He said when the world was tired and He decided to send His Son and it's the one word the Son spoke that has been changing the world since. That word is, Love!' Then I felt my own unworthiness and I stammered and I lost something out o' my speech and I've never found it, but I added,—'I'm only a fisherman but what I want to give you is as much as I can of the very same love.'

"Sir, that was all I had to say and she understood. Right after that a strange thing happened. It had been clouding up and it began to snow. Yes, we have once in a while a snow storm in summer, and we did that year. Then I took the great coat I had brought and wrapped her tenderly up in it and I said: Love has a good many duties, but I guess one on'em is to keep you warm.

"The snow came down and it covered the earth, but it didn't cover the blossoms and there was a world of white with pink beauty scattered on it, all the spruce and firs standing and looking and worshipping, if trees worship. And I said: I guess it's the Lord's way of saying, He's glad it's all settled. Now, if He had sent the rain we might a doubted, but He's sent the snow so's we wouldn't doubt and we never have.

"Now our trains sometimes take an uncommon long time, and you folks from the States laugh at our railroads, but do you know I never went a journey where the train made such a fast time as that night. We were in St. John's afore we knew it."

IV

SOME MIRACLES

"YOU orter been here a short while ago," Jim chuckled, as he addressed his friend Bob McCartney, who entered soon after Mr. Jewett had left. "We had a queer one here who believed you and I and the rest o' the sinners were out o' sight of the Lord. Told us the Lord didn't know nothing except the good and this world was just shadows and delusions."

"Well," said Bob, "there's a few real things left and last night Harry Marchant got up agin one of 'em. Towards night I met him on the Bowring Road. He motioned to me afore I got to him to keep my side o' the road. He acted just as though he had leprosy. When he got within hearing he shouted:

"'Bob, you never did me a bad turn and I'm not agoin' to do you one. You keep your side of the road and don't ever speak to me when I go by. I was comin' along a spell back and I met some skunks, not one, but a mother and father and two children. They was walkin' separate and I tried to dodge, but I couldn't dodge four ways at the same time. I'm goin' home now to bury my clothes, scour my skin and try to forget myself.' Now,

Harry Marchant didn't meet no shadow and he was bathed in the very oil o' gloom."

We all laughed, but Jim was the first to sober up. "See here, boys, we mustn't poke fun at the queer one. Some folks probably get a blessing without thinking straight. Mebbe he's on the way to a great faith. There's more'n one way across the sea and we all got to go thru the same narrows to get into the Harbor.

"There's this much to be said in favor of the fellow, he's beginning to read his Bible. Seems strange though that outen the same book men draw so many different things. Then, it was written by many a different one and it's intended for all. Perhaps when we get too far astray He'll send us another Son and a new Book.

"Though I don't believe in his notion of getting rid of a real world with real things in it, an' pushin' God out of this world, I do believe in miracles. Now some folks come to a miracle in the Bible and they sit down in front of it like the Marys at the tomb and they never are able to roll it away or pass it Just beyond that miracle is a great truth, there always is, and these folks never get beyond wondering and doubting about how it happened to be there.

"Take the story of the miracle that happened to Jonah. I don't pretend to say whether he ever had a berth in a real whale or not. It may be the boat

was called a whale and he took passage on her against orders. But either way it's a beautiful truth we find, after we get over worrying about the whale. The point, I take it, is, the man was trying to run away from his duty and the story tells how he fared and how he came back and was established as a prophet. A good many folks seem to be still worrying about the whale and forgetting all about the truth. I'm not sayin' it didn't happen. It could a happened and stranger things have happened, I am only saying that whatever you believe about the whale the truth is there to help just the same.

"I don't like the way a good many folks talk about miracles, anyhow. They look at 'em once or twice and then they say that it couldn't a happened. Why it doesn't follow because the Lord couldn't work a miracle on them He couldn't on somebody else. It may only prove they was too hardened in their sins and their doubts to be worked on, at least, for the present. Then it may be the thing has happened. right before their eyes only when it comes to great things and spiritual facts they are more'n half blind.

"Raisin' from the dead I suppose would be considered the biggest miracle of all, and perhaps it's about the hardest to believe. But at some time or other, I have never been able to tell when, and I don't knows any one else can either, the Lord God puts a soul into every child of His. It is something

that a father or a mother cannot put in of themselves, and it is something that can't be destroyed. A good many have tried to destroy their souls; but it's my belief they haven't succeeded, not any one of all that have tried. Now, if He is the only one that can put a soul into this earth house, He's the one that knows best when to take it out, and it might be very easy, on an important occasion, for Him to slip the soul back in again for a few days. He did that in the case of His Divine Son and the Son did it on several occasions, when He thought the soul ought to keep in its earth house a while longer."

"Did you ever hear anything about reincarnation, Jim?" I inquired.

"Big word, isn't it," said Jim, immediately giving full attention to my subject. "No, I don't know as ever I did. What is it, a doctrine or a medicine?"

"It's the belief, Jim, that souls return to the earth again in new bodies. Some believe that only in animals and lower forms does this happen and others that even when souls have been on this earth, they return again to complete their experiences. I was thinking that your idea of the ease with which God might slip in or out a soul might make it easy for you to believe in this rather strange doctrine of reincarnation. What do you think of it?"

"Sounds fairly sensible to me, on first thought. I don't remember anything in the Book about it, though I don't pretend to say I know all that's in that Book. It might explain some things that's hard to explain now with our present eye-sight. There's old lady Farrar, that I was a'telling you about, who cured herself of weakness and was about twenty years younger at eighty-five than eighty. She never had any real luck or any great blessings until she cured herself. She was one of the unfortunate kind, most always ailin' and when you went to see her she had some new misfortune to tell you about. She lost every one of her children and two husbands besides. Folks said it wasn't any great loss, so far as the husbands were concerned, but then they were hers and she took on considerable. Yet she has always been a decent woman, kept the commandments far as her neighbors could judge; paid her bills, when she could; went to church and said her prayers; and she had only a triflin' amount of good fortune. She had to wash and scrub for the neighbors to make ends meet and the splicin' was often poor.

"Just compare her life with the lives of other women folks whose husbands usually had a good catch and got good prices, whose children never died and who prospered thru the years and even handled the commands in a slippery fashion. It is hard to think justice has been done in both cases

or perhaps in either case. But if this miracle of slipping a soul back into a body and sending it to school again is true, that you are telling me about, why it clears up a lot of the problems. Mrs. Farrar didn't pass the examinations the first or second time she wàs here and she was sent back to study more and she is getting about what she ought to have in His judgment.

"I think, however, that reincarnation idea that you mention, I would need to think a good deal about before I cared to tie too fast to it. I presume I'll end up in putting it into quite a big package of goods I am saving for shipping across the stream when I take passage. I've marked them 'For His Judgment' and when I get over there, I'll sort 'em and see if they're worth saving, and if I'm still doubtful about any on 'em I'll just get Him to pass judgment on them. That's seems to be a sensible thing to do.

"But we was talking about miracles here and now. To me the greatest miracles Christ worked were not in curing diseases, but in curing sins. I have always thought it a miracle that He could take Peter with his stubbornness and his habit of speaking up too quick and make him strong enough, sound enough, to be a real corner stone in His new church. I callate Peter was pretty well along in years when the Master called him and old folks ain't as easy to work on as those that are young

and more pliable. I count it a miracle that He made over Peter so well.

"I have always been a good deal interested to find out what became of Judas Iscariot who betrayed Him. He wasn't a fisherman like Peter and he was harder still to work on. I know some of the ministers have got rid of him, by tossing him over board and letting him drown in perdition. But the Lord God that went after the sheep would a some day heared the moaning of Judas and a-gone to his rescue, seems though. If the Lord could work a miracle on Peter couldn't He some time, some how do it on Judas? He must a had some beginning points on him some wheres."

"I tell you the Lord has plenty a chances to work miracles if He wishes, right round here. There's Rascal Moore. He ain't been converted yet."

"*Rascal* Moore, did you say, Jim?" I interrupted.

"Well that wasn't the name his mother gave him, but she didn't know he would take all his father's bad points and add a few more evil ways. She named him, Pascal. But Rascal fits him better and everybody knows him by that name, and I have to think twice to remember he ever had another name.

"Rascal has done more to hurt the salt-fish business than any fisherman I know. He manages to get hold of the most ornery, two-cent fish there are

in the sea. These fish have a hankering for Rascal, I guess, and they scoot straight for his nets. When he gets 'em, he never cleans well and he always hurries the curing, and he is none too particular about either counting or weighing. He'll sell a little cheaper or lie a little stronger and get rid of 'em, usually to an exporter and they go perhaps to Naples and they're so poor, the folks who buy them never want any more Newfoundland cod-fish. The government ought not to wait for the Lord to punish Rascal, they should get after him right away.

"Rascal has other sins to account for. Everybody feels, though they don't hardly dare say so, that he killed his wife, and he's so mean he's never married since. If there's been a piece of deviltry carried out anywheres within fifty miles of St. John's that he hasn't had a part in, I have yet to learn o' the fact.

"I say to convert Rascal Moore would be a real miracle. And it will be done and I would be glad to see it done on short order. I know it can be done, for I have seen other folks as mean, ornery and selfish as Rascal come meekly to the judgment seat, I have seen 'em rise outen their old selves and become new and clean as a sunshiny morning after the air has been washed in a fog. I have seen so much done by the Lord on His own account and working thru the hands of His servants

that I never doubt that Rascal Moore will be made right.

"Yes, sir, I believe in miracles and I see them every day. Brown earth a-turning into blades and blossoms, in some wonderful way that He planned. No less wonderful I see bad men becoming good men; sick men becoming well men; and they that have been under the heels of sin and slavery standin' up on their own feet. When I can't explain something I still feel it is happening under the law and it's another of His miracles."

V

"I ASKED FOR FISH"

MY business in St. John's had been brought to a conclusion and it was time that I crossed to Port-aux-Basques and made my way thru Nova Scotia and back into the States. There was only one reason for my staying, and that was the chance of seeing a little more of Harbor Jim and perhaps learning a little more of his philosophy.

So it happened that again I was in the little fisherman's cottage and Mrs. Jim was brewing tea for me, for she never permitted even an inquirer to come to her door without his cup of tea. I put a question to Jim that fortunately set him to talking about prayer. I had expected to draw out a fish story but I found him launching into an account of his belief in prayer and his ventures in talking with His Father.

"What was the best catch you ever had, Jim?" I questioned him.

"It was last April and it come in direct answer to prayer," Jim answered promptly and without the least embarrassment.

"In answer to prayer?" I said, and the tone of surprise was in my voice.

"Why not," said Jim. "You believe in prayer, I suppose, then why limit it. I needed a big catch. I'd had to paint the house and there had been many expenses and I had to have a big catch to tide things over. You will remember that the Bible takes for granted folks will pray for fish, for it says:

"'If ye ask for fish will he give you a stone.'

"No, the man that asks for fish and asks right gets fish and the man that asks for bread gets bread. It doesn't matter what you want, prayer will fetch it. You remember He said:

"'Ye shall ask *what ye will* in my name and I will give it you.'

"I don't pretend to set myself up to judge of what the parsons should or shouldn't do. I am more or less an ignorant man, so far as schools go, though I have read a heap since I was converted, and what's more important, I have looked and thought a good deal. And I've looked in more'n one direction. Old Mr. Squibbs who used to live out to Heart's Delight was an odd stick. His wife died and he took to livin' alone and he got kinder warped. He built him a house with only one window and he always had only the one view when he looked out. Thinks I, some folks are like old Mr. Squibbs, they have only one window and looking out o' that window they see only a few things and no wonder they're often a little lackin' in the loft.

But I've tried to keep all the windows of my mind and soul open and to let the light in and to look out on all sides. The result o' all this lookin' and a thinkin' is that some parsons and some folks, parsons is folks, though they are commonly reckoned in a different class, don't understand the nature o' prayer. They take it the Lord has got kinder out o' touch with the doings of His children, and it's up to them to let the Lord on to the situation. I have heared some prayers in churches that sounded like a newspaper recounting the happenings. Strikes me they must have a queer notion of the Lord, to think He don't know what's happening to His own created children.

"There's other prayers appear rather impudent. They tell the Lord just what He ought to do. Who are we, poor creatures on the earth, who can't see back of us, or before us, but a very little way and then only when it's a clear sky, who are we that we should rise up in our conceit and tell the Lord what He had better do. It's turning the boat round and headin' it the wrong way. We are to ask Him what He wants us to do. We are to come to Him not to give knowledge but to get wisdom.

"Parson Curtis called me impudent because I asked the Lord for a mess o' fish, and a big mess, too. But I don't agree with the parson on this matter. I don't know why we shouldn't ask Him for what we think we need, but there's a right and a

wrong way of asking. Mind you I didn't presume to tell the Lord how to send them or where. I just left it in His hands. I prayed something like this:

"'Kind Father, we were talking over blessings last night and I mentioned a good many that You had sent us; and then when I'd finished sayin' my thanksgivings, I asked that You make it possible for me to find a mess o' fish and a good-sized one. Now I know You'll say no, if it's best, and I'll not murmur or complain; but if it seems to You to be best, You'll know the way to send them and when it's best. It's all in Your hands and I'm not dictating to You, Father. But I want You to know that we are needing fish and that I'm a-goin' to keep my eyes open and my boat trim and my hooks and sinkers right and my nets all mended, and I'll be waitin' for the Word.'

"That's just about the way I pray. I am not afraid to come boldly to the throne of grace. He would never find fault with my grammar, for doesn't He encourage the little folks to talk with Him. Sure, that's just what it is talking with Him. When we talk to one another, its conversation; when we talk to ourselves, its thinking; and when we talk to God, it's praying.

"I never yet have told the Lord how to do anything, or how to fetch my gifts. For since all things and all powers and all means are in His hands, He doesn't need to be told. I most likely

wouldn't know the best way for transporting His gifts. I have to ask humbly and faithfully and then to keep the doors open, so's whoever He sends will find me ready and waitin' to receive.

"Then again, I seldom pray for an easy time or a smooth sea. I want to be strong and I don't mind wrestling like Jacob with the strange one, so long's I come out the winner. I don't mind if the sea is ruffled, or the waves mount, or the wind lashes the sails, so long as I know He has an eye on me and keeps me. I have found that if He sends me extra work, He always sends along extra strength, and the blessed part of it is that the strength comes at just about the time the work does.

"I pray sometimes for health for my body, but I am much more likely to pray for the health of soul. For I dread sickness of soul, more'en I do sickness of my body. It is far harder to get rid of selfishness than to get over a stomach-ache. I'd rather see my little Clara sick with the measles than to see her developing dishonesty."

"How long does it usually take the Lord to answer your prayers," I asked, and not jocularly, but in the hope of finding out what results had come to Jim as a result of his sincere prayers.

"How long does it take before it rains, do you know? Can you tell when the frost will take my cabbages or the snow heap up my door-way?

Neither can I tell when the Lord will send what I ask. He knows better than I do. He knows the value of delays, and how long to try my patience. I wouldn't say He hurried, for the more I come to know of Him, the more I find it true that He has taken time to do most things He has done. You can get an idea of how He works by looking at this earth that He took so long to fix up for us. As I've told you before, I think the Lord loves to surprise us children and often He sends a blessing when we are least expecting it and the answer comes on a dark, stormy day when it's like a ray of sunshine breaking thru a cloud.

"I talk over all my needs with Him, but I don't devote all my praying to myself. I've done quite a lot of praying for Rascal Moore, and some day the Lord will surprise Rascal and me and he'll be converted. Of course I pray for my own wife and my own little girl and I pray for Bob McCartney and I also remember Spotty, my dog. If I had a cow, which I haven't just now, I'd pray for her. They are God's offspring, and they were planned by Him and they need His care to provide fresh green and abundant water. It's a responsibility for which we need help, the caring for the other children."

"You are wandering away from your fish story," I reminded him. "What about that big catch? How did it happen?"

"It was very simple. I went out to the fishing grounds. It would have been asking too much of the Lord to have demanded that He send them ashore. I went where I'd be likely to find fish. And when I got to the grounds, I heared a voice say, 'Let your nets down on the starboard side.' And I did as He told me and I had the best catch of the season."

VI

LIVIN' ALONG

SEVERAL months had passed without a word from Harbor Jim, when one morning going thru a batch of mail, that was given over to business matters, I came upon a rather soiled envelope that was post-marked "St. John's." I was quite sure that it was from Jim and I pushed aside the communications from firms that offered me oil stock and a fortune and the letters of others who were suing for favors of one kind and another and turned with the relish of a boy to read the message from my friend. I am willing that you should read it, but I have made some corrections in spelling and a few in grammar, that you may read it about as he would have read it aloud, about, I think, as he intended it to read.

"Dear One,

"It's a long time since we've seen you on the flakes. It's a long time since we've read the word o' the Lord together beside the evening lamp. I'm not thinking of coming to New York to see you. I know I have been invited manys the time, but I'm not risking a leg yet in your full streets. It's gettin' bad enough in St. John's with all the autos a-whisking down Water St. It's a fine thing that

we can send a message up there to you. It was a kind Father that made it possible for us to get acquainted with each other as well as with Him. I often think of the Master's ideas on the subject. You remember He told us if we really got acquainted with our brothers we should know the Father, and without that acquaintance we couldn't really know Him.

"There ain't no great thing happened to tell of. I've just been livin' along. Eatin' and sleepin' every day and fishin' most days. But I've been prayin' every day and a receivin' of replies day by day. The Lord's been with me all the way. Yes, just as much as though I could write you of a great, sudden happening. There's a good many folks I find who recognize the Lord's doings in the big, flashing things of life and forget Him altogether except at them special times. It's rare that I sit up with a corpse, which I often do, without hearing a confession about the Lord's hand and the Lord's doing in the coming of the stroke; but it's most likely that same man who is very conscious and pitiful didn't have much thought or dealings with the Lord till his sorrows come upon him.

"Now the Lord is in the Valley of the Dark Times and He's on the Bright Height of Victory, but He's also along the Common Way, the level road that makes up the every day's travel. That's

what I used to forget and that's what I'm beginning to remember and it makes heap a different in your knowledge o' life itself and the joy you get outen it.

"There's countless folks know He never fails in time o' need, but I'm one who finds that He never fails at any time and that every day is a day o' need.

"It may be I've met the wrong kind o' folks some of the journey, but I've found a good many that make a heap a trouble just out o' living. They remind me o' Martha who got so fussed up doing common housework she couldn't understand the need o' spiritual house-keeping at all. Folks don't seem to have time enough to live their lives easily. They start off with a hitch and they break down afore they get very far. Seems though they thought there want goin' to be another life after this one and they'd got to do all eternity's work in this little span o' time. Don't seem reasonable and natural to expect a man to do the work o' two worlds in one. The Lord don't expect it neither.

"The Lord Jesus had about the biggest task on hand that any man ever had. His job was to save the world. He had only three years for His ministry and if he had lived as some of the folks hereabouts are livin' He would have so consumed Himself with worry and fret that He would a died with a fever afore the first year was over. One thing I

note as I read His story is that He moved majestic like He had time to do what needed to be done. I guess it's the things that we could get on with out that take the most time and gender the most worry.

"There's always time enough to do what the Lord intended to be done in this life, else He wouldn't have assigned it. He wouldn't run His universe on a leisurely and comfortable plan, if He expected us to wear ourselves out hustling. I take it He counts a thousand years are as one day not only for Himself but as well for us children. Thinkin' of His plan kinder takes the fever outen your veins, kinder makes you understand what His Son meant about the peace that passeth understandin'.

"Effie is the same as ever. She's just livin' along, same's I. The children are doin' well at school. Bob McCartney was over night afore last. His boy has got the rheumatics, but I guess tain't nothin' permanent. The government is thinkin' o' takin' over the railroad again. Our railroad has had a hard time and it's been found fault with a good deal, but it's got an iron constitution and I guess it can stand it. As I told you once, it's all the railroad we've got and it's a powerful lot bettern no railroad.

"I am thinkin' often these days of little Peter. I can think now without swallowin' hard and I'm beginnin' to get comfort instead of trouble when

I think. I have been thinking about the conditions o' life over there. Sometime when your down here I'll talk with you about the Heaven Home, but it would take too long to write it out and then I don't knows you would be interested. Any how it would come out easy with your kind o' questions. I like you, but I do think your about the hardest questioner I ever knowed.

"Respectfully yours, that's how letters are signed when a man writes you for fish or bait or somethin', but I don't see why it ain't proper for a friend, for certain we ought to respect our friends, and the fact we can respect 'em makes us the more sure their friends.

"Jim."

"P. S. I saw Bob McCartney last night. He was lookin' well and had his behaviour (silk-hat) on. He had been to a party."

VII

THE HEAVEN HOME

WHEN again the good fortune brought me to Newfoundland and led me out to the fisherman's cottage, I did not forget Jim's promise to tell me of his observations concerning the future life. We had, thru our increasing friendship, come to understand each other. I had learned when to keep silent and I knew Jim's moods and when to intrude would be the height of ingratitude and when to enter would be the act of an accepted friend.

The reading of the Book had been finished for the evening and there was yet a half hour before my friend would count it his time to retire. "How about the Heaven Home, I think that is what you called it," I asked, and Jim, without parleying, was ready to speak freely in answer.

"Yes," he said, "I like the word home, as applied to it. I couldn't think of Peter as wantin' to stay in a mansion. In the Comfort Chapter in John, I've always read the word 'home' in place of 'mansion.' The parsons tell me that there are some mistakes in the translatin' o' the Good Book, and I am sure that it's a mistake here. There ain't enough comfort in the thought of a mansion for

most of us common run o' folks, and it was for us that He come and told of this life and the life to come.

"I'm sure it's a home. I think it must have in it things that match up with what we got here. I don't see how we could feel at home without something like tables and chairs. We had a parson one time who knew all about it over there, accordin' to his tell. He told us about the crowns and harps and the golden streets and the singin' that went on all the day long. But I callate no Lander would care for such a life as that, and if that's what it's like there's precious few of us 'uns over there.

"Now if it's a home as I think it must be since the Father has planned it, there must be homelikeness there. There must be somethin' that corresponds to tables and chairs and all the little things that go to makin' up a real home, else how could a man be happy over there, who had just left a happy home here. I'm not sayin' we shall always need them things, but I am a sayin' that in the very next life we must have things we are used to for a spell till we get to the point where we don't need them, but somethin' else. Sounds sensible to me to think that way.

"You remember that after the Lord was dead and Peter was plumb worn out and discouraged; there didn't seem to be no hope nowheres; he decided to go fishin'. I callate there are times when

a man would rather go salmon fishing than to do anything else in the world, provided he knows what good salmon fishin' it. Now for these fishermen about the only thing the Lord can do, if He wants to make 'em happy as He promised to do, is to give 'em a chance at fishin'.

"I wouldn't be at all surprised some morning in Heaven to be trailin' along the bank o' some good stream fishin' and lookin' up sudden to see the Lord there a fishin' too.

"You smile, but why not? Do you think the Father is so foolish as to drop us down in a strange place where we don't understand and we don't know what to do. Does it appear to you that the Lord would take a little fellow like Peter and send him around with a harp. I'll tell you what Peter would want to do, he would want to jump rain barrels so as he would know how to jump ice pans when he got older.

"What good would it do to take any little fellow outen the primary school and put him right into college. It wouldn't do him or the college one particle of good. It would be a sheer waste for everybody concerned. I think the Father is wiser than that, and it's always kinder amused me and somewhat disgusted me that the parsons have imagined heaven to be so teetotally different from this life.

"I've seen so much of His wisdom here, I can't

come to think that He's working blind and foolish over there. Will I know little Peter, sure I will, or it wouldn't be heaven. Then his new little body must look like the present one, only stronger and it won't hurt it so much when he pinches it.

"He'll get into the place that fits for him, not because he's sent, but because he just naturally goes where he belongs. And as it is with little Peter so it will be with every one. Perhaps by this time he has seen the Christ, for the kingdom is always found quicker by a child than by a grown man. Children see things that we older folks find it hard to see."

"How about Rascal Moore?" I asked.

"Just now he's taken his cat and dog and he's gone to the woods.* Mebbe there a stick will hit him and knock a little sense into him. He's by no means hopeless. I've seen worse ones than he is get sense afore they died. But you mean what would become of him if he went just as he is. Well, there must be sufferin' for the likes o' him. You can't, and I find the Lord Himself don't, seem to make a sinner into a saint all of a sudden. He may wake him up sudden and start him, but it takes time to get him rounded off. He'll go where he belongs just as the others; and if for a while he belongs in an uncomfortable, painful place why there's where he'll go. I never could see the sense

* Gone to a lumber camp.

in trying to think that everybody would go right off to one same place and be in heaven. There's too much difference in folks; there's the converted and the unconverted; there's the sinners and the saints; and though you put 'em in the same place, it wouldn't be the same place for them. It don't seem probable to me either that they can't never change their places when they get over there. There's a good deal o' changin' here, so there's likely to be over there.

"There are changes in the earth homes, there'll be changes in the heaven homes. And it will be well so long as the changes are for the better. I can't think that will always be the case, howsomever, for it ain't the case here. But gradual I'm expectin' conditions will improve and the handicaps are less over there. With the help o' Moses, Isaiah and the prophets and saints we ought to get on at a fair pace. A tremendous lot o' mothers is over there; they've been a goin' out one by one for a terrible long spell, makes me dizzy when I get to thinkin' o' some o' these subjects. Mothers don't loaf so long as there's chance to help kids, an' I'm callating that they'll do some pretty good work along lines o' convertin' over there.

"I expect to hear the baccaloo* over there and I'd rather hear a baccaloo than a nightingale or a lark for it would seem more like home. That's the

*A loon.

big thing and the Lord ain't likely to disappoint me or any one who is lookin' for a home over there.

"The heaven home is a good sight nearer than most folks think. The journey is short and it's only our poor sight and our hearin' that has made it so far away. I know Peter's often near me while I'm at work and it's a comfortable feeling, not a scarey one to think he's liable to be around most any time and I must be on my guard not to let slip any string o' words that would be bad for him to hear. It chucks a fellow up to feel that he must be on his best for the little fellow sees and knows. I want to be such a father as he'll respect. It must be mighty oncomfortable for some folks when they get over there, for some folks don't do no growing after they lose their loved ones and how in sank they expect to be fit company for their folks when they themselves get over there is more'n I can tell.

"Because there's homes there don't in no way interfere with it's bein' a beautiful place. It don't have to have golden harps to make it worth while. There's probably rivers that are prettier than 'ourn, and there must be pink calmia, fox-gloves and sweet william, pansies, tea-bushes and a good many others that I don't happen to think of. There must be places in heaven that look like Deer Lake, Gaff Topsail, Kelligrews and Brigus. Mebbe there's places in heaven like New York, too, though from

what you say it will need some changin' to be kept as a heaven city.

"I don't want you to think that I'm a gump* because of these ideas, but to me they've been a good deal of comfort and whenever I get to doubting at all about things over there I just recall it's a home and I settle back content."

---

* A very foolish person.

VIII

CHRISTMAS WITH JIM'S FRIENDS

THERE was the calendar right before me on the wall, with figures big enough to mentally hit me and hit hard, and I should have remembered that the road of the year had turned toward Christmas. But before me was an unfinished news article that even a hungry and insistent stomach did not seem able to push to a conclusion. Beyond my desk out of the window I looked now and then down upon the hurrying throng who were making their way across City Hall Park to Brooklyn Bridge. It was the hour when you do not know whether to call it day or night. It was indescribable in another way,—it was either misting or raining. I suppose a Scotchman would have called it mist and an Irishman rain. I think that any one looking out that night would have found it hard to see in the gray view anything suggestive of Christmas. I turned from the wet view to my unfinished work only to be again interrupted.

A Western Union boy burst into my office with a telegram. It was from St. John's and I wondered as I tore it open if anything had happened to Harbor Jim. It was short and for once the ope-

rators had apparently followed the author's spelling.

> come fur chrismus cant take no fur an answer no how biggest an best you or yourn hev ever seed come jim

A few days afterward a long letter came enforcing and elaborating the invitation. Jim wrote that he was already at work upon a Christmas that would eclipse anything New York had ever had. He had taken the idea out of a city paper that I had sent him a year before and had developed it and he wouldn't care to go forward with it, unless I could be there.

That is how it happened that a few days before Christmas, on the last steamer that would get me there in time, I was steaming into St. John's Harbor. Our boat was sheathed with ice and as in the morning we came thru the Narrows there were knobs of ice floating around us. The hills were white and the brown stone now and then stuck thru where the snow had lost its footing.

Landing I found the people in furs and the sleighs making merry music with their bells. A fellow agreed to drive me out to Jim's for two dollars and a half and I went in his sleigh, he called it, but in New England it would have more properly have been called a pung.

Jim almost literally wrapped me in his arms

and outdid himself in the cordiality of his welcome.

"How's fishing, Jim?" I asked when the first greetings were over and I had my feet up in front of the stove.

"Fishin', why land o' Goshen, this ain't no time for fishin'. There ain't but one thing on my mind an' that is Christmas. Don't you see what we are a' doin'?"

A kettle of oil was on the stove and the dipping of half grown candles had been recently finished. On the floor were half a hundred full grown candles.

Jim could talk only of Christmas. "I've been thinkin'," he said, "that if there should ever be a second coming of the Lord or He should send another Son to His people He couldn't pick out a better place than this. Suppose it was to be another birth. I callate this land has just as good a chance as Palestine and hereabouts is as fittin' a place as Bethlehem. Look out there at the snow! Makes you think o' a baby's blankets, it's so white and clean and pretty. Our nights man't have stars as brilliant as that one greater star of the first Christmas mornin', but I don't believe they have flyin' lights* like 'ourn. I hev noticed that the Lord tries to be as impartial as He can and since He sent His Son to the East last time, if ever He should

* Northern Lights.

send again why I think He'd be likely to send Him somewhere hereabouts. You remember the Son liked fishin' an' He'd be delighted with Newfoundland."

The door opened and Bob McCartney walked in.

"What's the matter, Bob; what you got your good behavior* on fur?" asked Jim as his friend entered.

"Ain't the occasion worth it? You sed yourself that it was to be the biggest Christmas the Landers ever hed; and I'd like to know if we aren't in a way celebratin' now while we're gettin' ready."

"Who's coming to this Christmas, Jim?" I asked, taking my turn at a question.

"Well, everybody in this town, quite a mess o' folk from St. John's and Quidi Vidi. Some from Brigus, Kelligrews and Heart's Ease. Aunt Saray Bailey is a' comin' from Nancy Jobble.† It's such a general invitation that they ain't no definite countin' no how, but their comin'. Everybody that meets anybody hereabouts and nowadays jes' says are you a' comin' to Jim's fur Christmas."

Gradually by prying questions I found out what Jim was planning to do. He had been extremely interested in the account I had sent him of the illuminated tree in Madison Square, and had resolved to have the trees on a neighboring hill-top all il-

---

*A silk hat.

†Lance du Diable.

luminated where they stood. In place of electric lights he was engaged in making tallow candles by hand.

The day before Christmas, Mrs. Jim was up very early and when I came down to breakfast she greeted me with this:

"Got to make a biler full o' tea this morning fur the Decoratin' Committee will be here shortly."

"Yes," added Jim, "they'll be here shortly and then we'll be a carryin' out Christmas. Up your way they fetch it *in,* but we're a goin' to carry it out, good and proper, this year."

The first arrival was Bob, who had caught the full contagion of Jim's spirit, and the second was Parson Curtis.

"Hello, Pa'son Curtis," said Jim as he ushered in his guest. "Did you come to look on or to work?"

"Put me in among the workers, Jim," replied the parson.

"That's right, Pa'son," Jim spoke with heartiness. "I like a pa'son that ain't a mite afraid o' work. I callate that our Lord was one o' the greatest workers this world ever seed, and it's a good thing fur those who are a takin' His place to be up in the front row o' workers. Here's a bag o' candles and here's a coil o' wire. You can take 'em up the hill and begin hitchin' 'em to the tallest tree. You can begin on the low branches an' when

the younger fellows get here we'll let 'em shiney up to the taller branches."

By eight o'clock, fifty men and boys were at work, many of them bringing their own donation of candles, and each time that Jim saw more candles coming he beamed, for it meant more trees could be included in the scheme.

With banter, jest and story the work of attaching the candles went on thru the morning and at noon we went back to Jim's for dinner. We all knew what to expect and we were not disappointed, when with keen appetites, we crowded the little house and waited our turn for a hot plate of brewse. It's Newfoundland's distinctive dish and salt fish and pork never tasted better than that noon after our climbing up in the trees.

Walking back to finish our work in the afternoon I said to Jim:

"It strikes me it is a little unfortunate that the hill we are decorating has no tall spruce on top. The trees are well arranged on the slopes but the top of the hill itself hasn't a tree on it!"

"That's what pleases me about it. That's why I selected it, because it leaves room for the Candles of the Lord,' answered Jim. "There on the top is where the Light o' the World will shine out tonight. When we get the rest of the work done we'll place it."

An hour later Jim came dragging a sled with a

huge candle, four feet high, at least, and it was carefully erected in the centre of the open place on the hill. At three o'clock the work was finished and Jim addressed the workers:

"Thank you all. We'll knock off for a spell. Those that lives near can go home. Those that lives too far will find plenty at my house. Be back every one of you an hour before sunset. The sun won't wait for any o' ye and if you don't get here the lightin' will go on jes' the same, but I wants you all to be here, sure."

They began to arrive before the appointed time, but I waited within until it began to grow dark, then I stepped to the door and watched the multitude coming up from the valley. I remember once I went out with the crowds and climbed Mt. Rubidoux in California on an Easter morning. A little in advance of the larger contingent I stood and watched them coming up out of the darkness of the roads below into the growing light of the mountain top and the new day. I thought of that experience again as I watched them coming along the road to climb the hill and keep Christmas Eve with Jim. Only in this instance the picture was reversed and I saw them coming out of the light into the gathering darkness of the night.

There were many from St. John's who had come out for the lark of it. Men that worked along Water St. and Dock St. Girls from the stores

came in little groups full of tickles and nudging one another as things happened to meet their fancy. Women in black were in the crowd who had been before along a sorrowful way and turned to make this journey that they might find light. Some of them plainly showed by their demeanor that they were conscious of the fact that Christ was the best part of Christmas.

Boys were in the throng, many of them swaggering along with sticks, copying the manner of English soldiers who feel their importance when on furlough. Little girls tripped along, some of them singing a little Christmas song that begins

> "I saw three ships come sailing in,
> On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day."

The chatter of the many voices did not altogether drown their childish voices and they rose like bird notes above the rushing winds of a forest.

It was slippery walking and now and then some one would fall, but a hand would be reached out to them and they would again go on with a laugh. Everywhere was the glitter. That is what the Newfoundlanders call the spectacle of a snow and icegirt earth. During the day many of our hands had been nearly frozen because of the ice on the trees and they were festooned and sheathed with ice where their branches were a little out of the

wind and it had not stripped them of snow during the recent storm. It was a white, shining world, softened by a waning light.

Now the fellows who had been appointed had been at work some time with torches and as we looked up tree after tree put on a garland of jewels and stood forth resplendent for the feast. Parson Curtis had lit the first torch from the Candle of the Lord, as Jim called the big candle on the hill-top, and each torch had been lit from his.

Murmurs ran thru the crowd as the scene grew more beautiful with the lighting of more trees and the deepening of the night shadows. It was now quite dusky, but the snow kept the light so that we could see the workers finishing the lighting.

When all was ready, standing beside the Candle of the Lord, Jim spoke:

"Brothers in Christ, we all are that tonight. I am glad you have come to celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pa'son Curtis will lead us in prayer."

Jim knelt in the snow and the great company followed his example. The prayer was short and Jim was ready to announce the singing of the first of the Christmas hymns, when some one I didn't know made his way thru the crowd, and waiving all formalities, touched Jim on the arm and spoke hurriedly:

"Rascal Moore's took sick. He's got a ketch in

his glutch* and the Missus wants you to come over right now to sit up with him. She can't manage him no how and she's sent for you."

I was standing beside Jim, watching now his face and now the lights. I looked squarely at him now and thought of the weeks of preparation that he had gone thru and how like some rare flower that blossoms only in the night it had unfolded petal by petal before his delighted eyes. I thought, too, of Rascal Moore, who had so long been living up to his name. It seemed unfair indeed to ask him to go now on this Christmas Eve that he had planned for and was making so successful. Let any one else go if they would, but surely not Jim.

"Tell 'em I'm on my way," was all he said to the messenger, and he moved along as he spoke.

Turning to me he said, what made me feel that he was still human, and without these words I think I must have doubted it. "It would have been a little easier if it had a' been Bob instead of Rascal."

The program began, though Jim was leaving and had turned his back on it all. Will Cunningham, whose tenor voice often led in the little church, started the Christmas hymn "Holy Night, Peaceful Night," and the crowd sang. The female voices seemed in preponderance and I fancied the men all thru the crowd were doing what the few

* A sore throat.

around me were doing, heaping choice epithets upon Rascal Moore.

Jim was yet to see more of his Christmas trees. He may have forgotten it, but his friends remembered that Rascal Moore's place was just about at the foot of the hill and some one started taking off the candles from the trees that were a little beyond and decorating those that were in the direct line toward the Moore house. There were so many hundreds the work was speedily performed. The candles were re-lit and by seven o'clock there was a row of lighted trees extending straight down the hill to the Moore house and at the top of the hill the big candle could now be distinctly seen against the black back-ground of the night.

It may be the angels are a little nearer on Christmas Eve and they decided to add to the wonderful beauty of that night for which Jim had worked and prayed. For now the northern lights came, adding great plumes of light, flashing across the sky in a glory burst of light.

" It's the dead men playing. Come to earth, they have, for Christmas Eve," explained Bob.

When all was ready some one knocked at the Moore door and brought Jim to the porch and he stood bare-headed looking up the wonderful avenue of light to the top of the hill. Then he lifted his eyes from the earth lights and the black crowd to the sky.

"The heavens declare the glory of God," Jim spoke quietly, but many could hear his words. "Mebbe little Peter is here tonight playing in the heavens and joinin' us in our songs. The Lord of Joy has come again!"

"What did you leave us for, Jim?" some one in the crowd shouted.

The hundreds stood waiting for Jim's answer. It was a hush of expectancy, such as fitted that holy night.

Jim answered slowly, measuring his words:

"I heard my Father calling and I went to answer Him!"

IX

HONEY-MOONING ON THE FLAKES

JIM lapsed into silence and his wife, laying down her mending, poked the fire and soon had tea brewing. The Landers are tea drinkers like the English.

"It's a beautiful story, sir, and we often live it over again," Mrs. Jim said as she poured the tea. I noted the flow-blue china and, answering my query, she said:

"It was my grandfather's. He brought it from England sixty years ago. Of course we're awful careful of it, but we use it, for Jim says the only way to have plenty is to use what you have. We always keep a pot handy and there's always a ready chair, for many a time a neighbor drops in and we wouldn't want to let them go on without a cup o' tea,—a cup o' kindness, Jim calls it."

"Now, I've read books," continued Jim, "and they always end just where they really should begin. When in the book story they decide to get married, then they stop short. If I should ever write a story, which I ain't likely to do, with my little learnin', I'd not stop there, but I'd let that end only the first chapter and I'd let the story go on with its joy and sorrow and its hope and its fear

and the problems big and little; the blessings so rare that follow along even as they do in real life.

"If I'm not tiring you, I'd be glad to give you another half chapter afore we all quit and turn in for the night."

Jim put down his empty tea cup with a smack of appreciation at his wife's proper brewing and deliberately cut off a fresh slice of tobacco and crushed it into the bowl of his pipe, and I knew that for at least a half hour, the story would go on, the story that was so real to him and now so fascinating to me.

"Bein' both of us very sure, and the Lord havin' given the sign o' His good pleasure, there beyond Brigus, we didn't wait long afore we were hitched up.

"We begun right here in this house and we started right in here the first night and we went to work on the flakes the next morning. We didn't go off no where's for a honey-mooning.

"I reckon there's no place a real woman would rather go at that time than to the new home where her life is agoin' to be lived, and that vacationing then ain't best for either. In any case we never thought a travelling, for you see the cod was running well and 'twas the height of the season and we had to fill the flakes, while we could.

"A man and a woman who gets married has to get acquainted and adjusted one to the other and

there's no better place for learnin' to conform than right where they are agoin' to live and raise their children.

"Course a couple can just pretend for a spell there ain't any work to be done, but there is, and I reckon the sooner they face it, the better for all concerned. If you're agoin' to cut bait, there's no use standin' round dreadin' it.

"When I was a boy we used to have in our house a religious book with pictures of saints in it and every blessed one on' 'em had a ring around their head, halos, I think they call 'em; now I callate that a home ought to have some kind of a halo over it and it's easier to get it fastened on just right when your startin' married life and if you don't get it on then, like's not you'll never have a real home but just a house for feeding and sleeping.

"We got the halo fixed on, eh, Effie," and the fisherman's eyes confirmed his words.

"So, next morning we put on our fishin' clothes and went out on the flakes. We'd clean fish for a spell and then we'd split and spread for a spell. Now I know from the standin' point o' city folks fishin' clothes ain't very scrumptious to look at and they are kinder soused with smell, but our clothes didn't interfere none with our honeymoon.

"Her dress was kinder faded blue, but I always liked blue. It's heaven's color and often the sea

borrows it, and that morning it made her cheeks more wonderful pink than I'd seen 'em before.

"There was a kind of down-right, deep-seated satisfaction to both of us in feeling we was at work; both of us a doin' what needed to be done and a sharin' of the burdens or the joys which ever you wants to call 'em. For I have found that some folks get their joys and burdens mixed up and don't seem to know one from 'tother till it's too late and they wake up with a start when they can't change 'em.

"Sharin', I said, and that's a word we set out to understand when we commenced an' with us it's always been a big word ever since.

"After breakfast that first morning we went to the flakes, I took out my wallet and said to her: 'There's no sense of my carryin' this round when you are more likely to need it than I. I'll leave it here behind the clock and when you need money, it's yours and bein' yours you don't have to give any account of it 'cept to your own conscience. More properly speakin' it's 'ourn, for now we're married there ain't no longer yourn or mine, but 'ourn.'

"I callate that if a man can trust a woman to bring up his children, trust her with his house and his reputation and his disposition, he ain't no cause to fear to trust her with his wallet.

"Bob McCartney always says a woman ought to

have an allowance, but I tell him too much bookkeeping is bad for a married couple and then how's a man able to judge the amount of an allowance anyhow. I guess most women earn more'n an allowance, and a sharin' always seems bigger than an allowance.

"I've heared folks liked honey-moons 'cause they got away from pryin' eyes, but I want you to know that our honeymoon want never once interrupted. The neighbors see we had work to do and they had theirs and we both of us did it. The children of the neighbors was often round with us then, but they made us think of 'ourn that was to come, in the favor of the Lord. And if when I helped her along from plank to plank, I held her hand a little longer than absolutely necessary, who was to care.

"There's been no decided change in the years; we've been honey-mooning along just about the same. Course with the children she had more to do in doors, but she's always managed, if there was an extra run o' fish to come to the flakes and help me over the rush; and if one o' the kids was sick or anything extra come, why I've always toted the load for her."

During the last few sentences Jim was watching the clock intently and as he spoke the last sentence, he crossed the little room and began winding the clock. I looked up and there, sticking out from be-

hind the clock, was a worn, brown wallet. Evidently he was still living up to his habit of sharing.

"It's time all decent folks was in bed," he said. "We done want to ape the city folks."

So bidding them good night I went out into the night. The rain had ceased and there were fast hurrying clouds breaking up and I could see the moon high over the spruces. I felt my way along the road back to St. John's.

X

JIM AND HIS BOOK

"THEY that seek the Lord understand *all* things." Jim spoke with his usual deliberation. Again, I had found my way to the little house, where now I felt welcome. It was "lightin' an' readin'" time as Jim called it.

"They that seek the Lord, understand *all* things," repeated Jim. I'm finding it true more and more. It is true that the Lord giveth to a man what is good in His sight, wisdom and knowledge and joy.

"We began sharin' the book, just as we began sharin' the wallet. I callated that since the Lord by wisdom founded the earth we'd have to found our earth home the same way.

"I'm not educated with figgering knowledge. I never got much school wisdom, for I never went much, and what I did get was mostly from the fellow that set on the bench with me instead of from the teacher. The teacher was so busy with fifty odd pupils, varying from four to twenty years in age, that he didn't have much time for any one. He had to skip from the multiplication table to algebra and often he skipped some of the pupils, and I was apt to be the one he overlooked.

"I know my limitations. A city chap told me about them once and I thanked him." Jim chuckled at the remembrance.

"'Look ahere,' the city chap said to me, 'do you know you've lost all the G's out of your vocabulary. Your words don't look nor sound natural. You better start in putting them on. And there is no such word as ain't. Remember that or you can't talk in polite society.'

"I presume he knew, for he talked as though he was on good terms with a dictionary; and when he went fishing and caught the hook in his hand he said words that weren't in the dictionary, and that came near breaking the first commandment. I've got some of those G's put back on, but not all. Two things is helping me on the job, the reading of the Good Book and the children.

"Book learnin's a fine thing. I'm stumblin' along thru a book or two myself, but I callate the prophets didn't refer to book knowledge when they wrote of wisdom, but rather heart and soul wisdom. The promise I recollect was this: 'For wisdom shall enter into thine *heart* and knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy *soul*.'

Then he reached for his Bible, but before he opened it he said:

"This is the most valuable thing in this house. I've been in houses in St. John's fussed up with furniture and things, so many you felt you would

disturb 'em by setting down, but this book wasn't no where to be seen and once I asked a woman to let me look at the Book, and she said she'd have to keep me waitin' till she found it, but she was quite sure she had it. Guess its wisdom never got very far into her soul.

"It's a satisfyin' book. Readin' of it is like quenching your thirst at a hill spring. In the days afore I was converted as a young fellow with the rest, I used to sail over to the French Island of St. Pierre and smuggle in a few gallons of rum. But it never quenched by thirst. It would leave me afterward, all-fired thirsty. But open this book and you find fountains of cool water.

"I've tried in the years to halt at the springs as Moses and his people did when they crossed the desert and come to a spring. There's many a river of the water o' life flowing sweet and fair as we journey thru the good book, but to me the promises are the springs and wife and I have lingered longest at the springs. We've marked them and there's a good many of them and we haven't found them all yet. She has helped me mark 'em. A fisherman's hands get a bit calloused and clumpsy and she does most of the markin', but I do my share of the discoverin'. It's always a happy night, when we find a new spring and rejoice in a new promise, but it's a glad night when we quench our thirst at any one of the never-failing springs. Their all of

'em fresh an' sparklin'; there's nary a one of His that are salt or bitter.

"Effie keeps a pencil handy there with her sewing things and when I find a new promise, I hand over the book to her and she underlines it. Then the favorite springs we mark in the margin, so we'll find 'em easy as we journey."

He opened the book, *his* book it was in more ways than one. It was very much worn; it's leaves were thumbed and now and then as he turned the pages a fish scale dropped out.

"Here are the Great Mountain Springs. The Master indicated them with a big, Blessed, so we wouldn't miss them, perhaps the clearest one is this, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, but they've all got sparkling water; their all promises that quench the soul's thirst.

"You will find some of these same markers in the Old Testament, though few folks seem to search there for the Blesseds. Here are some of the springs that are marked for our use.

"'Blessed are they that wait for Him!'

"'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.'

"'Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, even of Thy holy temple.'

"'Blessed is he that considereth the poor.'

"'Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.'

"Let me turn the pages slowly and when I come to a favorite spring we'll halt a moment," commented Jim as he continues his reading.

"'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.'

"It won't hurt you a mite, if you hev to wait awhile atween the verses. Most parsons read the Bible too fast. They go scurryin' thru the readin' like as though a shower was comin' an' they had to get in out of it post haste."

"'Fear not; I am with thee; be not discouraged; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yes, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.'

"'With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.'

"That there first part has puzzled me somewhat, for I've known many a one to die young. My folks used to say the good died young, cause the Lord had need of 'em over there. Struck me as kinder queer. But I reckon He meant here just what He said, as He does elsewhere. It's His intention to have long life and goodness go together, only some of us interferes with His plan, but He lets us interfere 'cause it's best and will work out His way in the end."

"'He shall call upon me and I will answer him.

I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him.'

"'Behold I will bring thee health and a cure.'

"'The Lord shall be thine *everlasting light,* and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.'

"'There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.'

"Did you think," said Jim, interrupting his reading, "that there were so many bright, clear springs for the traveller?"

Then, without waiting for any answer, he continued slowly turning the pages, reading me from his marked places.

"'Delight thyself in the Lord and *He* shall give thee the desires of thy heart.'

"'The joy of the Lord shall be your strength.'

"'He that endureth to the end shall be saved.'

"There are signs put up, too, not only to mark springs but to inform us," interpolated Jim.

"Now once as we was journeying, it come over me that these springs may have been intended for others and not for us and that very night, I come upon this sign and it took every bit of doubt out of my heart.

"'For the promise is unto *you and your children.*' How could it be plainer than that?"

As he closed the Book I said: "I, too, have a Book but I think sometimes I have lost my way as I journeyed and I am going to put up sign-boards

of my own now, so I'll never lose my way again. There is no use to camp in dark valleys when just beyond are the hills and the springs. It's unwise to wander thru deserts of generalizations when the promises are close at hand."

"Yes," added Jim, "what do we care whether King Agag was hewed to pieces or not. We know the words of salvation."

XI

RAILROADING WITH THE KID

If there is anything that I have told you about Harbor Jim that sounds feeble or sickly sentimental, I have told you an untruth. Turn back to where I said it, and cross it out. It doesn't belong in this story. It's rank injustice to Jim.

I have lived with a good many of the Landers. I have been fishing off the banks when the weather has kept every man of us praying, who knew how to pray, and I have had a chance to judge of these bronzed fellows, big of hand and foot and the same of heart, most of them, as they met the wind and weather, the fortunes of life on the sea and the shore; and I want you to know I never have known and loved a manlier man than Jim.

Maybe that was why I was surprised one morning as we were returning to camp from a trip up the Humber River after salmon, to see the tears rolling down his cheeks and to note that he hastily took his sleeve and wiped his face and swallowed hard.

In this land of uncrossed lakes and unfished rivers, there is probably not a fairer one than the Humber River and there are reminders of Norway both on the lower and upper Humber.

It was with some difficulty that I had persuaded Harbor Jim to leave his home for the trip inland to the Humber for salmon fishing. The Lander does not take readily to a vacation, indeed, the average Lander cannot afford to take one. After several days of argument, Jim gave in, with this sentiment:

"I think the Lord must a been a good fisherman, else He wouldn't a picked fishermen to follow Him. He wanted to swap stories with 'em now and again. The Master knew by the ruffle and the shadow on the lake when the fish was schooling and he told Peter where to let down his nets. I have an idea He went away sometimes to fish as well as to pray and that fishin' with Peter and John, they come to know each other better."

After that Jim was as keen as a boy to get ready the lines and the flies and to pack our little outfit. We went on the train to Deer Lake, crossed the lower end of the lake and went up the river. We fished near Steady Brook Falls and away up at Big Falls and the weather was all that could be desired. We caught more salmon and trout than we needed and we were bringing out all that the law would allow us to transport. It had been the best week's fishing I had ever had, and there had been some surprises. We had by chance fallen in with an old friend of mine from the States and another day we had seen a stag of great size following the birds down to a pool.

All had gone so well with us that I was at a loss to account for this sudden demonstration of feeling. It was not like Jim. I knew him and his way well enough, to know that he would not wish to be questioned, so we tramped on in silence over the carry, and it was not for an hour afterward that he ventured an explanation.

"There at the carry you may have thought it strange, the way I acted up. That little fellow we seed there playing with his father's canoe, made me think of little Peter. I've never mentioned him, I seldom do, but I think a good deal about him and often I believe he is with me. He made the carry and past over to Kingdom Come three years ago.

"Do you know sometimes when I used to watch my little Peter playing, and the light and shadows would be around him, I used to think, pardon me, he looked like the pictures I've seen of the carpenter's Son, His Son. He was our first child, born out of our first wonderful love, but he never was a strong child. I don't know why. I never could think of him as becomin' a fisherman. He used to like better'n the average child, to journey with us thru the land o' the springs during the evenings, and I thought mebbe the Lord would call him to be a preacher, though I never let on to him, what I was a thinkin'.

"When he was eight, he got kinder spindlin' and at the same time he wanted to go to the woods

and to see the island. He had another hankering, too, that was to ride on the trains. He used to collect engine numbers any time he was in St. John's. His mother used to say that she believed he'd be an engine driver instead of a preacher.

"At first I didn't pay much attention when he asked to go, but as he got thinner and paler, I began to take trips with him on the railroad. We had great times together going to places and for a time they seemed to chuck him up a bit. We went down to old Placentia one time. Ever down there? It's a lovely old place; lies sprawled out on a sandy beach with arms reaching round it and the hills sending down beauty on to it. We climbed the hill across the gut from the town, Castle Hill, and saw the crumbling ruins of the old French Fort and we went across to Bradshaw's and saw the Communion set that was presented by King William the Fourth.

"Sometimes we would take mother along and go to Top-sails and look down the bay as we ate our lunch. Then one time we went over to Belle Isle and saw the men working in the iron mines under the sea and Peter talked about what he saw for weeks. I was worried a good deal about him, but we both felt better on the trips. There was always something to see. For miles our railroad gives you Conception Bay with now a frame of hills and now one of spruces. Then in the centre of the island are great lonesome barrens where the

caribou come to feed and the little nameless lakes are clustered. Peter had 'em all named, but I think he used to change the names sometimes. There were so many his little mind forgot the long list.

"Then 'twas fun to be on our railroad. It's a road that throws you about some; makes an impression on you, and a good hard one, sometimes. But it's the only railroad we've got in the Dominion and without it our country wouldn't have the farms it has now, nor friends like you, coming and going.

"I remember when we took the sleeper, the kid and I. We didn't often do that; we couldn't afford it, but this time we were going over to the Codroys and I put the little fellow to bed and sat down for a spell of thinking, across the aisle from him. Suddenly the train gave a lurch. Guess the engineer got kinder hot stoppin' to drive cows off the track and we was a hittin' it up as much as thirty miles an hour. What do you think? Little Peter come a flyin' down from his berth right into my arms and he says, not hurt a bit, only tickled:

"'Pa, a fellow has to be put to bed more'n once to stay put on our road.'

"He always called it our road, though he knew its short-comings as well as I.

"We only took one winter trip and that was a long one and I blamed myself many a time for taking the risk, though I don't know's it hurt him any, and I'm sure I always kept him warm and

covered. When we got to Gaff Topsails, the track ahead was solid, sheer ice and the wind swept fierce across it from the south. They strapped the train on the track, so's it wouldn't tumble over. Seems funny now, but it wasn't then. But we didn't suffer any. They had lots of food-stuff aboard and when it give out the train hands went across the snow to the next town to get more. It took us fifteen days to get to Petrie's. The store-keeper at Petrie's had been up to St. John's to buy goods and he was on the train with us, anxious to get home. He was kind to little Peter and rode him pig-a-back every day, when it was too bad for him to walk about.

"The store-keeper reached Petrie's in thirteen days, two days ahead of the train, by walking the last ten miles. His folks was surprised, for they didn't expect him until the train got in.

"Still that trip we made better time than the trains sometimes do in the winter. One train took twenty-six days to get across the island.

"On these trips, Peter and I would come home with many a story to tell mother and little Peter would be wildly excited and there would be big, red spots in both his cheeks; and when the excitement of the trip was over he would grow weary. He would cough and want to eat less and sleep less, but always he was cheerful and a-planning for railroading with his Dad."

It came time to camp for the night and Jim stopped the story, as he started our fire and I began to put up our tent.

XII

THROUGH THE VALLEY WITH THE LITTLE FELLOW

WHEN we had eaten our fill of fried salmon and blue-berry duff, that no one could stir up and bake better than Jim, and the camp was tidied for the night, Jim went on with his story.

He had come to the hard part of the story, the saddest part of his life, and I was glad that it was dark; I knew it would be easier for him. I was glad, too, that the camp fire was dying down, for thus I would see less of suffering that might be revealed could I see his face in the brighter light.

"I had the Grenfell doctor come. I'd sent ahead to have him met at the Hospital Ship and a doctor, a great man from the States, on his vacation, they said, come over here to our place. He was giving his vacation because he loved Grenfell and the fishermen.

"Little Peter answered all of his questions and I was sheer proud of him. I could see the Doctor liked the little man. He said to Peter, when he had finished examining him:

"'I'll make you better, my little man, if I can.

You take all the eggs and milk the hens and the cows will let you have and grow so fat your mother won't know you.'

"But to me, he said, when he walked down the road a piece with me:

"'You're Harbor Jim, they tell me, a man loved hereabouts for the fights you've made to reach the harbor in a night of storm. I am hating to tell you, Jim, but it's goin' to be a hard fight this time, the hardest fight you ever had. There's a chance; but one lung is all gone and the other's bad. I'll do my best, but if you have to go thru the valley with the little fellow, I'll only hope you won't forget to live up to your reputation.'

"Then he left me all manner of directions, about eggs and milk that was to give him ammunition for the fight. Told me to soak him in sunshine and so on. And I did just as he told me. I gave him his cod-liver oil, when I had to invent fairy stories to get him to swallow it. I wrapped him up in blankets and sat him in the sunshine. His mother did as much or more'n I did. I used to listen of a night to see if he breathed all right. I listened, when ever Effie was asleep, to see if I could tell if he breathed as strong as he did the night before.

"Those days my heart was sore all the while, but I couldn't let on for fear she'd know just how I felt."

Jim swallowed hard, but he had made up his mind to tell me the story of little Peter and he wasn't the man to back down. He had a knife and a piece of a birch and he was whittling away. The light would flare up a moment and I could see him looking straight ahead into the fire and whittling faster.

"Then I had to cover it up from him; for little Peter was sure that he was getting better. Seems though the worse he got, the surer he was he'd be better tomorrow. When he got so weak I had to carry him across the room, he began to talk more about spring and railroading again with his dad.

"Sometimes when I'd been off and was comin' home, I dreaded so seeing him, thus weak, that I'd rather a-gone thru the Narrows on the darkest night God ever made, than to face Peter with a jolly quip. So many times then, and so many times since, I have thought, if I only could have toted the load for him. If only my hand could a-held it up for him. He was so little and frail and I was big and strong. And it was the utter, awful helplessness of it that made it so hard to bear. We wanted to help so bad and there was so very little that either of us could do.

"We didn't have Clara then. She didn't come until afterward, and then Peter was all we had. It didn't seem that we could give him up. I reasoned with myself and I didn't one night forget the Book.

But there were nights when we halted at the springs that our mouths were so dry and parched that even the Water of Life seemed not to be sufficient to quench them.

" We went deeper and deeper into the valley. He grew weaker and weaker. Just like a little flower that is fading away. One night he grew worse. It was February, and I put on my snow shoes and started for St. John's for a doctor. I walked away into the night and I got a doctor and was back afore dawn.

" The doctor took his pulse and said:

" ' He'll be crossing at the dawn.'

" Little Peter often listened to the Book and he was beginning to love it, too; and just before the sun broke that cold, February morning, he whispered:

" ' God is light; in Him is no darkness at all.'

" Then it was morning, but oh, it was night and the valley for us! The doctor left us and we sat alone, her hand in mine. Effie didn't say anything; I think if she had I couldn't a bore it. And there was no minister present. I was glad of that, too. I guess they all want to help, but a good many on'em that I have knowed want to argue and to tell you it's all right and you don't want to talk just then and arguments don't offer much comfort. The time had come when only one could comfort us and we had to find Him. Some do not find Him

for days, some for weeks, some never find Him again.

"The words that kept saying themselves over to me were these: 'Be still and know that I am God.' I was some impatient, some bitter. I know I oughtn't to have been, but I was, and I answered the Lord: 'I *am* still; see me suffering here; is that all the message?'

"It was a good thing we had something to do. We had to see to the little wasted body. We had to arrange for the service. We had to tidy up the house. We shared it all, the new sorrow and the pain, just as we had shared the wallet and the joys. The minister come way from St. John's and I was grateful to him. I don't remember just what he said, but I am sure that Peter was worthy all the good he said of him; and I know that I needed all the prayer he made.

"But when it was all over and the house was so quiet, it was harder still. It didn't do no good to listen for his breathing. There was no need to think of eggs or milk for the little fellow's breakfast. He was gone!

"I was very tired and I was about to turn in that night after the funeral, when Effie said:

"'We need to halt by the springs more than ever.'

"I knew she was right, so with a sad heart I opened the Book. I never knowed just how it was,

perhaps the Lord himself guided my hands, but we come to a little halt at the 14th chapter of John. It was the Spring of Comfort and Peace, we so much needed. It was the place where so many have camped before in their night of sorrow and gone forth strengthened and rejoicing in the morning. We were very thirsty and it was real water, the water of life, and we drank as we never had drank before. He spoke to us and said: 'Let not your heart be troubled!'

"I won't repeat that chapter, but it has never lost its power to refresh and comfort since the day He first uttered the words. If you ever have to go again thru the valley yourself; halt there. It will be the wisest thing you ever did.

"After that I was able to think clear again. I said to myself. I trusted the Father before and He never did me wrong. I can't just see, but I can trust and it will grow brighter and so it has, though sometimes I don't see quite plain, even yet. I know that He must have a place for the little fellow and He must know what Peter needs. He'll know how to pick the best teachers and all the experiences he needs. My Father is looking out for him. He can do no wrong."

For a little while all was quiet but for the chattering of the river as it hurried on down to sea. The wind freshened in the trees. Messages were passing above us. Jim brought a bundle of fresh

wood and the fire leaped into a cheerful blaze. There was not any more that needed to be said. We both made an effort to shake off the sadness and fell to talking of the weight of the day's salmon catch, as we undressed. We carried but one little tent and slept together. Some hour after we had gone to bed, I imagined Jim was trying to find out if I was asleep without disturbing me. At last he decided that I was awake and said:

"I'm sure it's all right about little Peter. We're out of the valley now and are finding again the sunny plain."

XIII

THE QUEER ONE

"SARTIN sure! By the big dipper, it's sartin shame!" Bob McCartney stood at my door all excitement as he delivered himself of these explosives.

Bob is a short man and middle-wide, and he is on the increase. This particular morning he stood on my stoop, the very personification of heat. He took off his hat and mopped his head and his red face and without waiting went on with his message.

"The Missus Jim is took sudden and terrible sick. Doc Withers is there and don't know what ails her. Think of anything she could take? Anything you know of she could do? Everybody is suggestin'! Neighbors comin' an' goin' all the while, tryin' to do something for the Missus Jim. Didn't seem to be anything more I could do. You can't try everything to onct, so think's I, I'll go and see him. He comes from New York an' mebbe he'll have a new idea."

"It might be a good thing to let one or two ideas have a chance," I replied. "I've noticed that ideas that get rushed and crowded don't do as well."

Bob brightened and pulling on his cap, backed

down the stairs. "I'll tell 'em to go slow and let the first ideas have a chance."

I wisely concluded that Jim would have all the help and more than he needed and I did not call for three days. When I did Mrs. Jim herself answered my knock and from just behind Jim shouted:

"She's all right again. Didn't prove so bad as we thought. Something got inside of her that didn't belong there and soon's it got out, she come along all right."

"Was it the doctor or you, Jim, that cured her?" I asked, as I sat down.

"I've been thinking o' that a good deal, this day," he answered.

"Everything traces back to the Almighty, when you let your thought travel far enough, and I'd like to thank Him, first. I prayed a good deal and though I don't need no thanks, I believe those prayers helped. Then the neighbors helped. They loaned hot water bags and fetched pillows, an' done all manner o' things, 'till thinks I, nobody ever had such neighbors as us. Then there was Doc Withers. Now some folks give all the credit to the docs, but I don't; neither do I take all the praise from 'em. Their His servants, too, and I callate dividing up the responsibility and the thanks for a cure is a mighty difficult task. I know I ain't worthy to do it myself."

A knock, a quick, nervous knock came just then

and Jim answered it, throwing wide the door, as he always did, with his cheery, " Come right in."

A thin, tall man with a long rain-coat and big, black-rimmed glasses stepped in. Snatching off his gray Alpine hat, he introduced himself.

" I'm Clarence O. Jewett, of Boston. Am visiting in Newfoundland, spending two and a half days here. Came in on the steamer ' Rosalind ' from Halifax, yesterday, going back tomorrow. In St. John's I was told of Harbor Jim and that his wife was very ill, and I hired a car and came out here and I am ready to give your wife a treatment. I have been thinking that perhaps the Lord is using me to bring the only, real, true religion to Newfoundland. When your wife has seen the light and comes to know the truth that sin and everything material is a delusion, deception and a snare, she will understand that being perfect she cannot really suffer from an illusion. This earth and all things upon which we look are but shadows. When your wife is whole again and understands the non-reality of matter, she will testify and others may hear and heed, until many on this island will come to praise the Lord and to remember Clarence O. Jewett, of Boston, who brought the only, real, true religion—"

At this moment, Mrs. Jim, who had stepped out at the knock, re-entered the room and Jim had his first chance to speak.

"This is the Missus. The news you received is a little late, for she has recovered. Since you are a mound-tripper and doin' the country, probably we ought not to keep you. The road across is about five hundred miles, and if you're goin' to see any more'n St. John's, you'll have to hurry afore your ship sails. There was a man down here last year who staid two days in St. John's and then wrote a book about Newfoundland, but he skipped a few things."

The man was keenly disappointed. He changed his weight from one foot to the other, for he had not yet taken the seat that Jim had offered him. He took off his glasses and wiped them and then seating himself and clearing his throat, resumed.

"The cure is but temporary. Your wife will not be well until she has learned that there is but one thing to know and that is the truth and the truth about the truth. And though you cannot expect to understand it, I will start you on the way toward the one, only, real, true religion."

"Am I supposed just to listen?" asked Jim, "or do you think I might know enough to ask a question now and then?"

"Certainly, certainly," the queer man replied. "I have an answer for every question that is absolutely logical. Take the question of the existence of evil; that is the most puzzling question in all the world. I have an answer to it that is entirely satis-

factory. Nobody can contradict it. Evil is matter. Matter does not exist. Therefore evil does not exist and since it does not exist, it never could have been created. Evil and matter are just wrong statements of mind. Do you see? Is it perfectly clear to you?"

Jim gulped, as though he was in swimming and had accidentally swallowed some salt water. I had come to have a profound admiration for Jim and was coming more and more to appreciate his wholesome philosophy, and now I was waiting to see what Jim would do with this man's statements.

"You have doused me beyond my depth, I guess," was the somewhat puzzled reply of Jim. "It isn't plain to me. But heave ahead a little and mebbe I'll get some idea of what port you're sailin' to. The only thing you have said so far that has any familiar sound to me is what you said about the one, only, real, true religion. I've heard that several times before. Seems though most every kind o' religion and every different church feels that it's got the one, only, real, true religion. Strikes me, every blessed one on'em has got some of the real religion and also some foolishness and smallness and no one on'em has got the pure, undiluted article that Jesus Christ brought to the world. I think He come the nearest to livin' the real religion. But how'd you discover that your's was the only religion?"

The queer man evidently thought the question irrelevant, for he was off again.

"It is now proved that all is mental or mind. *Your* thoughts are the opposites of mind. They do not exist. They are even as all other things, non-existent, non-real. God is the only reality. There is no thing outside of God. You are not separated from Him."

"Then," interrupted Jim, "how about the Prodigal Son? Didn't he get separated from his Father?"

"That is speaking in terms of no-mind. You have not yet grasped the thought. Nothing can exist but good. God never saw the Prodigal Son until he came back, because he never has or can see anything evil."

"Your God may not see or know evil, sickness or suffering or anything that makes a man miserable. I say, *your* God mayn't, but *mine* does. It's his *knowledge* that makes Him compassionate. If He didn't know what was happening to His own children, that He had created and planned for, then I'd rather pray to Bob McCartney. Think, sir, what kind of a mother would your mother a-been, if she hadn't known when you cried, and you hadn't a-been able to climb up and lay in her arms and be comforted and forgiven? She wouldn't a-been a mother and God wouldn't be a God unless He knew what was a-happening to His own children! Why

man alive didn't He make the world; aren't they His, the cattle on a thousand hills, the lightenin' and the thunder, the sweet grass and the flowers and all things in and on and under the earth? If He has gone off and forgotten it all and don't know good and evil, if He don't know when we're tired and failin' and tryin' again, why what would be the use o' prayer or, for that matter, for livin' at all?"

The queer man, at this point, removed his rubbers, but made no comment upon Jim's questions. Perhaps his feet were so warm it was hard for him to keep his head cool.

"You are utterly deceived," he continued. "You are confusing the real and the non-real. You are following after shadows that do not exist at all. You do not know the truth. You are bound. You are looking at the mist of matter that will disappear as the knowledge of truth develops within you. If you will begin to deny the existence of evil, you will begin to banish disease and ultimately you will understand that all things are but illusions."

"Pears to me," Jim said, as the queer man paused for breath, before launching more sentences about the truth. "Pears to me, you're sailin' round in a circle, and havin' a hard time dodging the winds o' logic Call the flower, the mountain, and the man, shadows and illusions; if you will. I don't object to that, only I want you to agree with

me that they are beautiful. The only thing I am afeared of is that you'll make some folks think this is not *His* world at all; and I want them to know that this is His world and that He planned these things you have re-named shadows and illusions. I callate there's danger in your statements when you come to follow them out. Then, too, these shadows have been actin' about uniform for as long ago as the book o' Genesis and afore that, and I don't propose to try to get much farther back, for it makes my eyes ache to see back o' that.

"When you tell me this body o' mine is an illusion, it kinder riles me, for I believe the Good Father planned this body as much as He planned a soul for me. It's a house for my soul as long as I'm in this earth and I callate it's to be treated holy while it houses my soul. I know it will get kinder old and dingy bye and bye and I'll be quitting it, but that ain't no good reason for neglectin' it now.

"Of course if what you say was true and there was no material and it was all in thinking, then we wouldn't have to wear clothes, nor eat food and you wouldn't have to wear your specs, nor your goloshes, because it's a little damp under feet this morning. You may be different, Mr. Jewett, with your one, only, real, true religion, but we Landers up here all get a little older as days go by; we all like to be cheered by food and fuel, and we all feel

the difference between winter and summer, and we all travel sooner or later to the better land. Seems to be His plan."

The queer man was gathering words for new statements; but while he was listening to the last of Jim's replies, he was looking intently at his hands. If it may be permitted to speak in ordinary fashion of a man of his philosophy, his hands were dirty and he had become painfully aware of it. Jim noticed his concern and remarked with a certain acerbity of tone:

"You don't clean your hands with soap and water, do you?"

The queer man in turn showed some increase of warmth as he replied:

"I certainly do when I need to, that's only common sense."

"Well," mused Jim, this time very slowly, "do you know, I don't believe in using too much soap, it's caustic and it's harmful sometimes to the skin, but do you know, once in a while I get a bit riled and dirty inside o' me and I decide that it's only common sense to clean that just as I would my hands."

The queer man sniffed and asked for a Bible. "Have you a Bible?"

He won't get ahead very fast, if he thinks Jim doesn't own a Bible and know its contents, I thought; but I kept my thoughts to myself, for the

man had utterly ignored me, thus far, for Jim was keeping him as busy as he cared to be. Before Jim could answer he saw his Bible on the little table and it opened easily and he saw at once the markings and said:

"Glad you read your Bible, but it needs another book beside it else you can't understand it and it's a closed book. You need a key to the Scriptures."

"I callate," replied Jim, "that a man ought to be able to read his own Bible and interpret it for himself. The Lord has given every man a key in his own mind and heart. The fathers that have lived and died didn't have your key, but they got comfort out of this Book. Ever since the words were uttered they have been helping and some on 'em is so simple and beautiful that little fellows can read and be blessed in the reading."

The queer man read now from Jim's Bible:

"And Jesus went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom *and healing all manner of diseases.*"

"Do you believe that? There it is plain, too plain to be contradicted."

"Yes, I believe," answered Jim.

The queer man was surprised and it gave Jim time to add:

"Jesus also said: 'According to your *faith* be it unto thee. All things are possible to Him that *believeth.*'

"There's an old Indian lives down the road a

piece, who was all tied up with rheumatiz. He got back the other day from New Mexico, all cured. He'd never heard of you or your key to the Scriptures. He'd been to a place called Chimayo. Went to a little clay church down there and scraped up some of the clay from the floor and mixed it with water and drank it and has come back well. Every year or two somebody goes from St. John's away to Quebec and out to a place called St. Ann's, where they got a wrist-bone of hers, so they tell, and some of 'em come back well again.

"There's an old lady in Quidi Vidi nigh on to eighty-five. She got sick when she was eighty, grew feeble and pindling. She took to readin' this Book and praying all by herself and she got her strength back and she is as chipper as any woman of sixty in the Dominion.

"What was it cured her; what is it that cures lots of folks for a time, though we mustn't forget that we all go hence according to His plan. He's evidently got a good many rooms in His big house and He doesn't intend for us to stay too long in any one.

"Did these folks that drank mud, prayed in front of a wrist-bone, or just prayed, believe that they was living in the shadows; did they build up an airy, fairy world and re-name things; not a bit of it; they was cured just as you and I might be, can be cured. Mr. Jewett, they had *faith!*

"I believe it's the measure of faith we have that counts. The Lord speaks about our doing things He did and greater also, and we shall just as our faith grows. I believe in praying because it makes that faith grow; I believe in reading the Book for the same reason. If I had faith enough, I could, like Him, remove mountains or walk upon the sea; but it don't grieve me because I can't in a moment do the things the Divine Son did. Faith always seems to me to be a bigger thing than love. I guess faith is love that has learned how to bring things to pass.

"Let's not expect too much. Let's remember we and the world have yet to do a good deal of growing. I don't measure God's greatness nor His goodness by the number of times He cures my stomach-ache. It may be I'm pretty careless and a certain amount of pain is about the only handy Teacher He can find for me. It may be that in this first room some of us will have to be somewhat ailing, but let's not forget He gives us grace to bear as well as strength to heal. I only ask to be able to do my work and not grunt.

"I callate that if your one, only, real, true religion is devoting its chief thought and its most time to simply curing aches and pains, it ain't the religion of our Lord for He went about doin' *all kinds of good.*"

The queer man was fidgeting and from his looks

I concluded he was about to seek new pastures. Jim, noticing this, continued:

"I appreciate your coming, sir, proves there's good in your religion. You've got the missionary zeal and that deserves to be kept. After all we ain't so far apart, as it might seem, some ways; but we're starting from different points. I believe this is a real world, an intended world, with real folks and real facts and that it is a good world, His World, and it's a goin' to be better; only not all to onct, by re-naming the old and beautiful things He planned and sent."

Mr. Jewett was wise in withdrawing, for Jim was gaining in power and facility of expression. Now, as the man edged toward the door, Jim extended his hand and said:

"Don't lose your logic, 'cause there's no harm in mixin' logic and religion. If religion is any good it'll stand logic. Remember the Lord knowed what He was a-doin' and He ain't abandoned His children."

When he was well outside, Mrs. Jim spoke:

"Jim, do you think he has a screw loose in his loft?"

But the queer man was back in a moment, with a less confident air, but this time he had but one brief sentence:

"Please, I left my rubbers."

Printed in United States of America.